323.2
Con/Sha
7721

00047721

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

THE EASTERN MENACE

RUSSIA'S ADVANCE EASTWARD. Based on the Official Reports of Lieutenant HUGO STUMM, German Military Attaché to the Khivan Expedition. By Captain C. E. H. VINCENT. To which is appended other information on the subject, and a minute Account of the Russian Army. With Map. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Lieutenant Stumm was the only recognised foreign participator in Russia's advance Eastward, which caused such alarm in England. The book is an expressly authorised translation of his reports to the German Government.

'Captain Vincent's account of the improvements which have taken place lately in all branches of the service is accurate and clear, and is full of useful material for the consideration of those who believe that Russia is still where she was left by the Crimean War.'—ATHENÆUM.

THE RUSSIANS IN CENTRAL ASIA. A Critical Examination, down to the Present Time, of the Geography and History of Central Asia. By Baron F. von HELLWALD. Translated by Lieut.-Colonel THEODORE WIRGMAN, LL.B. In 1 vol. Large post 8vo. with Map, 12*s*.

Explorations in Central Asia are being simultaneously carried on by the Russians and the English, the two great rivals in the Asiatic world. Scientific research follows in the footsteps of military operations. Russia gives to Asia culture and civilisation. Every disinterested man must admit that this opening of new spheres to the development of civilisation is the greatest gain which mankind derives from warlike expeditions.

'A learned account of the geography of this still ill-known land, of the characteristics of its main divisions, of the nature and habits of its numerous races, and of the progress through it of Russian influence.....it contains a large amount of valuable information.'—TIMES.

'A lucidly written and apparently accurate account of Turkestan, its geographical features and its history. Its worth to the reader is further enhanced by a well-executed map, based on the most recent Russian surveys.'—GLASGOW NEWS.

ON THE ROAD TO KHIVA. By DAVID KER. Illustrated with Photographs of the Country and its Inhabitants, and a copy of the Official Map in use during the Campaign, from the Survey of Captain Lousilin. 1 vol. Post 8vo. 12*s*.

'Though it is a graphic and thoughtful sketch, we refer to it, in some degree, for reasons apart from its intrinsic merits.....He (the author) has satisfied us that he was not the impudent impostor he seemed to be; and though he did not witness the fall of Khiva, he travelled through a great part of Central Asia, and honestly tried to accomplish his task.....His work, we have said, is an able *résumé* of genuine observation and reflection, which will well repay a reader's attention.'—TIMES.

'A pleasant book of travels. It is exceedingly smart and clever, full of amusing anecdotes and graphic descriptions.'—VANITY FAIR.

SHADOWS OF COMING EVENTS

OR

THE EASTERN MENACE

47721

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL ARTHUR CORY

BENGAL STAFF CORPS

HENRY S. KING & CO., LONDON

1876

(*The rights of translation and of reproduction are reserved.*)

PREFACE.

THERE are two statements which, if true, could refute the following argument. One, that war has ceased its agency on earth; the other, that the greatness of the British Empire is independent of its foreign possessions.

I have endeavoured to show the truth of the converse of those statements, and from it to demonstrate the inevitable result of the policy now pursued in the East. (While these pages have been passing through the Press symptoms of a change in that policy have appeared—not a day too soon.)

Each item of evidence produced can be supplemented by ten in support of it; each fact asserted can be absolutely proved. Few statistics have been in-

serted, for they are within easy reach elsewhere. Few authorities are quoted, for they are too numerous to be arranged in a small space.

My object is rather to seek to concentrate public attention on a peril, than to disperse or bewilder it by the display of many points of observation.

ARTHUR CORY.

December 1875.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Inception of War	1
II.	Vulnerability of England	20
III.	The Strategical Position	37
IV.	The Menace from Without	67
V.	The Weakness Within	110
VI.	Auxiliary Defence	127
VII.	The Main Reliance	151
VIII.	Decay of Efficiency	175
IX.	Summary and Conclusion	191

THE

EASTERN MENACE.

CHAPTER I.

INCEPTION OF WAR.

AMONG the consequences of progress, or civilisation, as we term the effect of time on human affairs, there are two which are seen to be of the most conspicuous importance. The first of these is an increasing rapidity with which great social changes and political movements succeed one another; and the second is the multiplication of the human interests involved in each of those changes and movements, both foreign and domestic, not merely as the result of increasing population, but because those interests are vested in communities ever growing wider and vaster.

The tendency to this expansion of societies, having common objects, around a governing centre, notice-

able throughout the world's history, is the same which gave rise to the first combination of families into tribes, then of tribes into small states, kingdoms, or republics, and finally resulted in the merging of many small states into great Powers, embracing numerous countries, such as those of the present day. The process may be checked for a time, it may be even reversed, for we have numerous examples of the disintegration of the empires of antiquity; but the tendency itself remains, the fragments, if separated for a time, reunite, and each fresh construction is mightier, more complete, and more stable than its predecessors.

It is not difficult to imagine this process continued until after many struggles, many ruptures, and many reconstructions; the various Powers of the earth becoming age by age fewer and fewer, may finally be welded under the influence of extended intelligence and unanimity into one united empire governing all the world; and then only perhaps will the dreams of the philosophers and moralists be realised, and the millennium of peace be attained. But that period is as yet infinitely distant, and in the meanwhile there is much to be done, much to be suffered.

The processes adverted to in the growth of states do not glide on in a continuous and even flow; they are seen to advance by successive stages. Progress,

with its concomitant advancement of knowledge, and all material improvements in science, art, and manufacture, aids human effort in all its manifestations alike; it equally serves to strengthen the hands of executive government while that fulfils adequately its purpose, and to assist revolution if the disorders incidental to nations can find vent only in violent outbreak. Increase of population stimulates every form of energy. The rapid spread of information shared simultaneously by millions of people throughout a continent, gives enormous force and directness of purpose to public opinion, and to increased power gives additional susceptibility of guidance.

Thus modern history crowds its incidents. But though progress thus quickens its steps, it has as yet shown no sign of altering the manner of taking them, and each of the successive stages reached hitherto has been invariably marked by war. There is not a single symptom yet observable which can induce a dispassionate spectator to infer that future stages will not be reached by the same agency.

Of all the events which most profoundly affect mankind, which mark most distinctly the manner in which change is wrought, and which in their results declare and define the new position taken up, war stands prominently the first in importance. All other subjects of consideration are dwarfed into insignificance

by its side. It decides the fate of nations and the happiness or misery of countless thousands of individuals. It may be the means of flooding one district of the earth with prosperity, giving birth to a new era of civilisation, and on another it may lay the brand of devastation, turning fertility to waste, cities to desolation, and abundance to famine. It may bring wealth in its hand or ruin. It is so swift and violent of stroke, and so wide of sweep, that none can be sure of escape. No station is too high to be beyond its wrath, none so low that its suffering may not reach. Progress as yet has only served to enhance its power, enlarge its sphere, and magnify its results.

Modern wars differ only from those of earlier times in being vaster of scope because waged by mightier powers, and sustained by greater numbers; in being more complete of design, more fatal of effect because guided by superior knowledge, and supported by more ample means; in being generally of briefer duration because the most momentous results are accelerated by a more perfect skill and method of conduct.

But no influence capable of restraining war, or of mitigating its destructive quality, has ever yet been traced in the records of history as supplied by civilisation to man. The siege of Paris succeeds the siege of Troy with quicker action, with more hurried scene-shifting; but the drama is the same.

The most earnest peace-lover—he to whom war appears most horrible in aspect, most replete with the deepest ills that afflict humanity—cannot but admit the mighty force it exerts, the frequency of its visits, and the unquestioned supremacy of its influence. No one can ignore its work, however he may deprecate the means by which it is accomplished. In whatever light it may appear, it is above all things most attentively to be regarded, and its causes studied by all who would gauge human nature, or who would reason concerning human actions. In fact, it commands attention; the probabilities of its occurrence, the places of its outbreak, the means for its prosecution or prevention, all these points are, and must ever be, of the most absorbing interest to men who really think on the subject at all.

Before particularising the combination of circumstances which brings about international war, let us glance at some which surround not only humanity, but the whole organic kingdom. We shall perceive, 'as through a glass darkly,' that coincident with life in any form is an inexorable, interminable condition of struggle. From the first instant of conception of vitality in any germ, the tenure of its being appears to be an unending conflict with the forces around it; the destruction of weaker organisms, and the consequent accession of material or strength by assimilation to itself, attending the growth of every living thing from

vivification to death. Every form known of life exists by preying upon others. Reconstruction, by death to support life is the great design of nature. The spirit of aggression then is but the instinct of self-preservation, the desire for nourishment is inextricable from the motive for destruction, and strife is but the synonym for life itself.

Deep therefore, at the foundation of the scheme of being, lies the origin of war. From it man in common with every other creature holds his title to inhabit the world, existence itself being one continued conflict in which strength maintains itself, and weakness perishes. Therefore, as the seed is to the tree, so is the spirit of strife to the soul of man, and as the law that shapes them is to the leaves of the forest, so is war to human minds. That which we term peace—the temporary cessation of international struggle—is but the period of its preparation. Effort needs to be interrupted by intervals of repose, only that force expended may be re-acquired.

We find accordingly, as we should expect to find, that in states possessing vigorous national life, and that which is concomitant with it, capacity for growth, periods of peace are ever employed in the inventing by science, and in the perfecting by art of all warlike appliances; that at such times the organisation of armies is most sedulously studied, and their construc-

tion most carefully fashioned, and that each independent power is occupied in endeavouring to place itself at advantage with its neighbours in view of the next war. That is the actual present condition of the world, induced by natural and unalterable laws. The actual condition is a clearly distinct and indisputable fact. But let us assume with a certain school of modern philosophy, that the laws which produce it are alterable and unnatural, to be remedied by the improvement of man and his moral culture. Quoting one of the best and ablest of that school [1] we say:

'It may sound romantic, at the end of a decade which has witnessed perhaps the two most fierce and sanguinary wars in the world's history, to hope that this wretched and clumsy mode of settling national quarrels will ere long be obsolete; but no one can doubt that the commencement of wiser estimates of national interests and needs, the growing devastation and slaughter of modern wars, the increased range and power of implements of destruction, which as they are employed by all combatants *will grow too tremendous to be employed by any*, and the increasing horror with which a cultivated age cannot avoid regarding such scenes, are all clear, if feeble and inchoate indications of a tendency towards this blessed consummation' (the italics are Mr. Greg's own).

[1] 'Enigmas of Life,' by W. R. Greg.

That is to say, that one of the chief methods of preventing war will be that careful preparation for it which makes the engines of war 'tremendous.' Even granting that the 'implements of destruction' were due to the desire only of self-defence, it will often happen that the safest and surest way to defend will be the destruction by attack of the Power capable of offence. To a defeated nation it may appear that a 'wiser estimate of national interest and need' would have been taken by the avoidance of a war which brought disaster, but to the conqueror who has effectually precluded his enemy from injuring him, it would be difficult to point out a wiser estimate. If we go farther and seek an explanation of the order and tranquillity enjoyed by the most peaceful and well-governed city, tranquillity which we would of our benevolent design confer on the whole world, order which we would fain believe to be the desired consummation of the highest human effort, we are met at the very threshold of enquiry by the plain demonstration that the tranquillity we admire is itself but the result of force, ordinarily latent, perhaps, but capable of being put forth at short notice. And that a perpetual but not ostensible conflict for the preservation of order, is never intermitted; that the passions inseparable from the nature of man, and which let loose would dismember society, are kept in check

only and always by means of which force is the chief agent however disguised or concealed.

If this assertion be questioned, let any sudden relaxation of the bonds of order occur, such as is sometimes produced by unexpected and dire calamity—earthquake, or pestilence, or fire, and let the sequel be noted. We could imagine it even if history were silent, but the world is full of stories of cities on which sudden catastrophe has fallen, when the social bonds of law have been swept away like a cobweb. And when rapine, merciless cruelty, and murder have sprung at once from their lairs, in the human heart, to rob, to torture, and to destroy. In truth the 'majesty of the law' so often invoked by those to whom war and undisguised force are abhorrent, rests on the same base with them. It is as the majesty of the lion. Beneath the calm symmetry of form, unperturbed grace of easy motion, lies the incarnation of strength and destructive power. It is the might born of conflict, which has fashioned the grandeur of the stately limbs and nerved the giant muscles beneath the smooth skin; the awe which these inspire, the moral force which deters the beholder from awaking wrath in their owner, owe their existence to the physical strength which underlies them.

In writing of the necessity for deterrent punishment Mr. Greg uses the following expression: 'Due restraint

on known and habitual criminals is still impeded in the name of the much-abused phrase—"the liberties of the subject."' Such restraint implies force, for if the persons to be restrained were as powerful as those who would restrain them, there would ensue a fight. When a nation is to be restrained, if it be strong enough to resist, there is a war. The power that restrains is of precisely the same nature as that which destroys. If tranquillity be ensured to a town by fear of the policeman's bâton, so is peace maintained between nations by the menace of armies. If the 'roughs' of a town think themselves more than a match for the police, there ensues a riot. When a nation considers it can win advantage from another, there arises a war. · ·

That a general disarmament should take place in Europe because peace exists, is as reasonable a proposition as one would be for the disbandment of the metropolitan police on the ground that order reigned in the London streets. And while armaments are kept up, should any one nation be visibly weak it must be defended by some which are strong, or fall a victim to them. It was in ignorance or disregard of this truth that one of the most curious historical follies ever known was perpetrated. Just previous to the commencement of our war with Russia a knot of well-meaning persons, who were deputies of a party openly professing abhorrence of war, visited the sovereign of that great empire

then bent on the spoliation of a weaker neighbour. The burden of their talk to the Russian monarch was the sin, the folly, and the expense of war, and they declared that England, of which they were the representatives, ratified their views, and would have peace at any price. The extraordinary part of the story was, that the Emperor believed this statement, and there is no doubt that this belief confirmed him in his course.[1] We have only to reproduce the spirit of their address to the Czar in the form of a fair parody, which we will suppose addressed to the turbulent and dangerous classes of a town, to show the precise line of argument which, offered and accepted in perfect good faith on both sides, precipitated the Crimean War. We suppose the delegate of the peace party speaking to representatives of the thieves, burglars, and garotters of St. Giles'.

'Worthy citizens, we, the municipal authorities, the government, and all the intelligent people of England, are quite convinced in this era of civilisation that the rights of property are in themselves so sacred as to require no protection, save that of their own natural and inherent inviolability. We are satisfied that amongst you all there is no one who is not, by the mere development of moral culture, quite above sus-

[1] All evidence goes to prove that Russia was perfectly unprepared for the Crimean War; and this unreadiness could only have been caused by the Emperor's unbelief in its occurrence.

picion of coveting anything that is not legally his own. It is now universally acknowledged that the days of knocking a fellow citizen down, stamping on his face with iron-shod boots, squeezing his throat till he is all but strangled, with the sordid object of abstracting his purse, have utterly passed away. We are sure that none of you will permit such practices, and we are therefore happy to inform you that, owing to this general enlightenment, and the harmony therefrom resulting, the time has arrived when the cudgel, that relic of a barbarous age, in the hands of the policeman, that rude minion of an antiquated policy, is to be forthwith abolished, as no longer tolerable by common sense and the gentler wisdom of modern times. The ample funds which will be thus rendered available to philanthropy by the abolition of that reproach to civilisation—the police force—will be devoted to the endowment of a vast and sumptuous "Cadgers' Institute," of which you will all become honorary members, and where coffee and catechism, tea and tracts, soap and sermons, shall be in perpetual flow to refresh your happy and rational society.'

(Substituting the words 'life' for 'property,' 'armies' for 'police,' and altering the details accordingly, the above is what the peace party did say.) We suppose for one instant that such an address were believed by those worthy citizens, and we shall have no

difficulty in imagining farther, the state of London on the night ensuing. The Emperor took the peace party at their word, and war followed as a matter of course.

In thus drawing a parallel between the precautions taken by civil government for securing order and protection for property and for life and limb, and those whereby states endeavour to secure their independence and safety, the object sought to be shown is the common origin, the identity in nature, the universality and the permanence of the dangers against which both have to provide.

So far from gathering any assurance of increased unlikelihood of war from the advance of civilisation, all that we gain is a certainty of greater suddenness and violence in its commencement, and of greater speed in its course. Its great explosions are neither less frequent nor less fatal though they may become briefer of duration.

Therefore the urgent need of preparation for war is greater now than it has ever been, and increases rather than diminishes with all material progress. But if war be thus inevitable, should we not suspect a fallacy in the prevailing idea that it is an unmixed evil? That practically it is all powerful whether for good or for evil is demonstrated by all history; that there is no single sign now visible whence to infer that it will be less influential, or of less frequent recurrence in the

future, is forced on the mind in considering the present state of Europe.

Common sense would serve to show that, particularly at this juncture, the great object of a prudent nation should be rather to gain strength to wage war successfully than to seek to avoid the unavoidable. And that is the object avowed at this moment by two at least of the great Powers. That is the reason why Germany and Russia have standing armies of more than a million soldiers; why France is striving to emulate their example; and why the aggregate of the armed forces of Europe amounts to nine millions of men. No amount of sentimental talk concerning the horrors of war can alter or disguise the stubborn fact: the policy of those Powers is so far natural and intelligible in that they would cease to be in the front rank if they pursued any other. May it not be that this state of things, which certainly exists whether we like it or not, is neither so terrible nor so unnatural as we in Great Britain are in the habit of assuming it to be?

Thinkers have ere now seen reason to doubt whether international war, judged of in all its effects, adds to the sum of human misery on earth. It may be but one phase, and that not the most destructive, of the interminable strife which is the condition of existence. Famine and pestilence slay more; destitution, pauper-

ism, and disease from pressure of over-population, count their victims as thickly. Assuredly war has no monopoly of horrors. Take the pages of contemporary history as unfolded before us in the daily journals.

Oppression and pain, hopeless struggle and prolonged and fruitless agony, bodily and mental anguish, cruelty and wickedness, fill up the record. There are countless evils which in the time of our most boasted prosperity, born of peace, debase the minds, torture the bodies, and deface and brutalise the features of men. Their offspring are to be seen in the squalid hordes that throng the city which has never been touched by hostile shot. It is the rapacity, the shameless greed, which springs up most rankly in the artificial security of peace in the souls of those who give themselves up to the lust of wealth, that turns the fair earth to hell to crowds of hopeless human beings. For one pang inflicted by war, how many are caused by the poisons which Mammon brews? how many torments are suffered at the merciless hands of the Moloch avarice, which consigns children to the mine and to the mill to stunt and wither them soul and body, which devotes women to the Fiends of scorn and shame, and men to the Furies of despair and crime? War can add nothing of horror to the picture which this present hour of peace could display to us were the veil of conventional decorum under which it is hidden removed. We talk of the

'sacredness of human life:' it is not sacred. When starvation ceases in our streets, when murder by its means, and by neglect, no longer claims its victims by hundreds and thousands of children annually, the phrases we catch up of the 'horrors of war' and the 'sacredness of human life' may bear some significance.

'One-third of all who die in England are under five years old; in many towns, or districts of towns, and among great masses of population, this proportion reaches to one half or more, so cheap is human life in the highest civilisation.'

'Two hundred and seventy-six children were found dead in the areas and streets of London within twelve months.'

'Infant mortality and infanticide destroy nearly half the population, and more than half in certain classes and conditions.'

'A deputation from the Metropolitan Association of Officers of Health stated to Lord Palmerston that out of sixty thousand children dying annually in England and Wales within the school ages as many as fifty thousand might have been saved.'

In other words they were murdered.

These extracts from one of the morning papers show a glimpse of but one of the horrors of peace. Considering these things, we shall hardly satisfy ourselves that our unreadiness or unwillingness to en-

counter war is due only to our great goodness and virtue; that we alone of the nations of Europe must neglect our arms because of the exceeding wickedness of resort to them.

The destruction of great cities by war was formerly held to be a direct consequence of their crimes. Were that faith well founded we could not refuse to see in the present condition of London the portent of coming disaster. Palaces raise their heads in every direction. Wealth inexhaustible glitters on either hand in all its streets. Public works more stupendous than those of Babylon or Rome attest the luxury, the ambition, and the magnificence of its people. And side by side with splendour stands misery, gaunt with hunger, squalid with unutterable woe, born of vice and disease, and savage and dangerous with crime. Nor is the rising peril confined to the one source and from the lowest class. Flagrant corruption flaunts its success abroad. A profound disbelief, not only in religion, but in ethical truth, is visible in the transaction of all business, whether mercantile or political. To acquire vast wealth by fraud, to dispense it with open shame and sin, is so common in these days as to excite not even comment. It is a mere matter of observation to inform ourselves that when vice throws aside even the cloak of hypocrisy mischief haunts its home. And in England are scores of cities rivalling

London in both wealth and misery. On these and on the nation possessing them, war descends to destroy and perhaps to purify, to shift the burden of human woes, but not necessarily to increase them.

The same riches that turn the hearts of their possessors to the evil which saps the national strength act also as the incentive to foreign cupidity. These in their accumulation, together with the commerce which produce them, constitute a temptation always before the eyes of the envious. We have drained the resources of half the world into our coffers. Englishmen make fortunes out of every country to spend them in their own. Enterprise abroad has laid the foundation of half our homes. We have collected this wealth often by force, not unseldom by fraud. And now that it is gained, we neglect the means for its security, we affect to repudiate the policy which attained it, and the exertion of strength to maintain our hold of it. We speak contritely, and with our mouths full, of our want of appetite. We no longer desire our neighbours' goods, but we desire peaceful possession of our own gains, and because we wish it there is to be no more war.

But though it is necessary in the endeavour to show cause for the inevitable occurrence of war, to glance at all the influences which are working to bring it about, it is no part of the plan of this essay to

indulge in vague denunciation of social mischiefs or to ascribe to them undue power and weight. There must be a plain reason alleged and a weak point for assailing shown if warning is to be of any avail, and both of these shall be shown only too clearly.

CHAPTER II.

VULNERABILITY OF ENGLAND.

We have already seen that one of the effects of the material development of the age is to render the breaking out of hostilities among nations more sudden than formerly. There is another effect of it upon the course of modern war, which is quite as certain, and touches us more nearly.

As the advancement of education tends to place the mental acquirements of men on a footing of equality by permitting lower capacities to be brought to an artificial level with the higher, as regards knowledge, so the result of progress in the machinery of war is to equalise to a considerable extent the troops of all the nations which are similarly armed.

There can be no doubt that the position of Great Britain, her greatness and power, have been due primarily to the combative qualities displayed by her people. Almost all her greatest victories have been won against superior numbers by dint of that quality

which is best expressed by the term pugnacity. This is twin-born with the desire to pursue and to slay instinctive to man, and which is more fully developed and exemplified in the British race than in any other. The natural bent of men's minds and their dispositions are most clearly seen in their hours of relaxation and amusement. Amongst us this love of the chase colours our national life, and it may be traced in every class, from the highest to the lowest, in every age, from childhood to senility. From the peer, whose greatest pride is to be a master of hounds, to the peasant, whose keenest joy is in a rat-hunt—from the boy whose pet plaything is a toy sword, whose first mechanical effort is a watch-spring gun, to his great grandsire who sits in judgment on the breechloader he cannot carry, half in envy, half in disparagement, the ruling passion is manifest throughout. 'It's a fine day, let's go and kill something,' is the phrase put into an Englishman's mouth by the foreigner who would sum up the character of John Bull in an epigram. From Eton to the village green English boys of all ranks and ages delight in pugilism—the simplest, most primitive, and readiest species of combat known. In the lower ranks, debarred from the still more fierce and dangerous pastimes of the wealthy, the delight continues through life. In the highest it is replaced by searching the whole world for excitement, in sport, or in war itself.

Call this quality what we will—pluck, hardihood, or animal spirits—it is identical in essence with the pugnacity which has achieved England's greatness, and which is the result of the great law of aggression adverted to.

This quality will, doubtless, always have great influence in determining the issue of battles; but as it is seen to the greatest advantage when the fight closes to a hand-in-hand struggle, so its importance diminishes as the distance is increased between the combatants. But warfare is becoming more and more a science of fighting at long distances, so that one of our former advantages is being gradually but surely withdrawn.

The more perfect the machinery of war the less scope for individual strength and daring. The chief means we had for counterbalancing the odds against us is unquestionably diminished; yet the odds were never so great as now. Even granting that science and skill have done their best for us, they have done equally well for our neighbours. More masterly strategy and more brilliant tactics than those displayed by Germany in the recent war could hardly be.

When each individual soldier is carefully trained to a high degree of excellence, when he is armed with a weapon perfected by modern art, and when his efforts and movements are directed by a mind of the highest

order, he is a foe not to be lightly regarded, be he of any nation. When such foes number by millions, even England may well enquire if she can match them. But with all her combativeness, and notwithstanding her fighting and aggressive instincts, perhaps because of them, she has an army which does not amount to one-tenth of any one of those maintained by the great Powers.

Confident of her strength, her valour, and insular position, she dispenses with the precautions essential to less considerable states, and, in point of available armed strength, she is inferior to them all. For actual defence of her island citadel we will even assume that she can provide, even against the colossal forces of the continent; but, for service abroad, the idea of her contending on terms of equality with the great Powers cannot be entertained. The love of liberty in Great Britain, the self-confident feeling of strength and courage, is, in fact, the origin and root of her present incapacity for war. The notorious jealousy[1] of the English people of a standing army unquestionably arises from two sources, one the fear that the army should be used as an instrument of oppression at home; the other, contempt of the characteristics of continental states whose constitution differs from ours in having none of the freedom of thought

[1] *Vide* Clode's 'Military Forces of the Crown.'

and action which we claim as a birthright. The first has made the army always unpopular in England. It is this which, in despite of the brilliant services her armies have performed for her, making her what she is, has rendered enlistment the last measure of disgrace by which a lad of the respectable classes can fill up the list of youthful delinquencies. It is this feeling which makes it difficult for us to find space for a barrack, which causes smug Paterfamilias to object to the neighbourhood of a building whose inmates he learns to believe are useless, idle, worthless loungers, who eat bread they do not earn, and whose scarlet uniform, though it has blazed in the front of many a famous field for England, is here only, in his eyes, a badge of inferiority and a sign of peril to his female flock.

Rotund divines, sleek in broadcloth, and easy in study armchairs, twit commanding officers of regiments with indifference to the 'ruin of a thousand housemaids.' Petitions are got up and numerously signed and addressed to Parliament, for the removal of soldiers from 'respectable' neighbourhoods. Purveyors of public amusements object to the presence of even non-commissioned officers in uniform in their seats for spectators, lest the dread of contamination from the hated garb should keep 'respectable' people away. So utterly discredited at home is the noblest

service in the world. Whatever the grounds for this fear and jealousy may have been formerly, we shall see hereafter that they are baseless now, and the feeling must be removed before we can hope for an adequate re-organisation of our national defences.

The soldier of modern days cannot be improvised. Very much more time is necessary for his production than was the case when every man flew to his arms if his country were in danger. For any modern emergency, raw recruits, even numbered by thousands, would be perfectly useless in the line of battle. Modern war crowds its incidents even more closely than does modern history. The year required to teach our defenders the use of their weapons might leave us nothing to defend. The few weeks in which a modern campaign runs its course would hardly suffice to teach men to move to their right or to their left at the word of command; to give them skill with the rifle would be impossible; and for the all important purpose of affording the reliance on discipline which is the main-spring of armies, for teaching trust in the guidance of leaders, and for inspiring mutual confidence in the ranks, there could be no opportunity. The time for this is now, while at peace, and all the nations of Europe know this but ourselves, and are taking measures accordingly.

Even admitting that our national self-confidence is justifiable so far as regards our defence of our island

shores, granting that the regular troops kept in Great Britain and Ireland can, with the aid of our constitutional army the militia, and with the volunteers, keep the world at bay, there is another most important point to be considered.

It is often said that Great Britain, as an insular Power, is not concerned in continental affairs, that she has no interest in continental war, that great armaments are unnecessary to her, that she cannot compete on land with the great Powers, and that it is incompatible with her position and interest to attempt to rival them. The truth is precisely the reverse.

Strategically Great Britain is a vast continental Power, having indeed a citadel, as we have said, or keep, encircled by a natural and admirable line of defence, the ocean; but having her main territories at great distances from the governing centre, in two great continents Asia and America, in opposite quarters of the globe, she has long lines of communication to guard between them, formidable rivals fast approaching her frontiers, and menacing those lines from the flanks throughout the greater portions of their lengths. She is so nearly concerned in the maintenance of the equilibrium of power in Europe, that any great disturbance of it must involve her in war to protect those lines. She must be prepared at any moment to place an army in the field, or see her communications with India cut off.

She is at this moment holding detached points in Europe, the possession of which is only justified to her in her character as a great Power, holding by necessity and by force of arms that which is essential to her as a road to her richest dependency; and she knows, or ought to know, that her title to these possessions will be challenged the moment her power to make it good seems open to question. How absolutely insecure and unstable that equilibrium is at this time is plain to all Europe, and patent to every intelligent person who can read.

A revolt in Bosnia may be put down, but the mere fact of the course pursued by the great Powers, their intervention and the manner of it, show how unreal is the authority they affect to support.

Russia may be willing to delay for a while the raising of the 'Eastern Question.' It suits her to do so for the very intelligible reasons we shall presently show, but it is impossible to doubt that it will be raised when she is prepared to overbear all opposition; it is impossible to deny or conceal the immense importance of the question to us, and equally impossible to ignore the apathy which our statesmen display with regard to it.

The very first motive in that struggle for existence and self-preservation which is the law of organic nature, is cupidity, the parent of war. If any one nation be conspicuous for possessing in its single

grasp as much wealth as that held by all the rest of the world put together, then its strength must be commensurate with its possessions; or there can be no escape from the conclusion that whenever and wherever possible there will be an attack made on that nation by the others. This is no matter of theory, no probability resting on the doctrine of chance; it is a certainty as absolute, and as immediately the result of the fundamental laws pointed out, as the fall of the apple in Newton's garden was the result of the law of gravitation.

The point at which the attack will be directed will as certainly be the weakest displayed, if there be any so conspicuous as to be plain to the whole world. We have seen that our citadel England herself is strong by natural position, and we will assume that it is adequately guarded from invasion. But the island of Great Britain represents the heart only of the British Empire. Mortal wounds may be inflicted elsewhere. Can we suppose for a moment that the wealth and prosperity which renders this island the envy of the world is bound up within it, and that the great limbs which embrace the globe may be severed, and yet that this wealth and property may remain to us here within the four seas. Impossible. Our main territories, those from which our strength and our main resources are drawn, lie far away.

Not less in importance than even the safety of our island home itself is the defence of our lines of communication with those distant territories.

The two immense dominions which constitute the bulk of our Empire, Canada and India, wholly dissimilar in most respects, are alike in these, that their communications are very distant from our centre and both are objects of keen attention and of jealous envy to foreign Powers, whose strength, size, and energy render them formidable rivals to us, and whose gain by any misfortune to ours would be most considerable. America on the one hand, Russia on the other—each of these Powers is advantageously for itself based on our line of communication, the one with India, the other with Canada, each has a direct and most tempting advantage held out in the prospect of disaster to us, in the shape of an enormous increase of wealthy territory to itself. Within the last few years, war with both these Powers has been imminent, and with one it was desirable. To avoid it with America we paid a large sum of money. To avoid it with Russia we acquiesced in the violation of a treaty which was the only remaining result of our last great war in Europe and the breach of which has placed us in a signally false position.

It cannot be supposed that the questions which were then mooted, and the consideration of which

was staved off, are not capable of being reopened. We may hear no more of the Alabama claims, but other matters of dispute have not been wanting between America and ourselves. They are not found with less difficulty between two Powers, when one of them is ready to fight and the other to pay money to avoid fighting. With regard to Russia, it is impossible for us to continue to cede to her all she demands, all she takes, alike in Europe and Asia, unless we are really prepared to abdicate our own position entirely. We may avoid war for the present, even for a few years, at this price, but the moment we thwart her designs, war is inevitable. Her long cherished purpose, the establishment of her power in the Black Sea, we have already permitted. In Turkey and Persia her grasp is already closing on the lines of communication with India, which material progress would have opened to us. It is no purpose of Russia to declare war, her work is proceeding better without it. Before her deliberate but crushing advance two effete Powers are crumbling away, and it is open war alone that can stay her steps.

Important as our relations are with America, and injurious to our interests as would be any loss to us of territory in that continent, both loss and injury would shrink into absolute insignificance if compared with that which threatens us in the prospect of any decline

of our empire in India. It is mainly from her that we derive our vast wealth and the boundless prosperity we enjoy. It is from her, 'the storehouse of the world,' as Peter the Great called her, that our coffers are filled to overflowing. Thousands of English families owe competence and affluence to India alone. She supports half our army. The greatest trading company in the world owed its existence to her. It is not too much to say that it is the possession of India which confers on Great Britain her only claim to be a first-rate Power. Statistical information concerning this great and to us essential dependency is on so vast a scale and so easy of access to all readers, that it is no part of the design of this volume to reproduce it here. But we have only to bear in mind a few significant items of it to perceive how all-important she is to us.

A dominion of more than a million square miles, producing a revenue of more than fifty million pounds sterling annually, remits directly and for expenditure in Great Britain fourteen millions a year. Add to this profits on trade, private remittances, interest on loans, on public works, railways, and telegraphs, and then conceive what would follow if India were severed from us. Her resources have not yet approached their full development; they are practically inexhaustible, and their flow to us, great as it is, only at the comparative commencement of its course. Indicating, then, only what she really

is to us, and assuming it to be generally understood, we shall pass on to the main object of our enquiry, not forgetting, though without expatiating on, what she is to us in other respects than mere money profit. We shall assume that England does not forget that for more than a century India has been the scene of some of her proudest triumphs, the training-ground of some of her best soldiers, the school of some of her truest heroes. We shall take it for granted that our national pride, as well as our national sense of profit, certainly precludes our acquiescence in the tame delivery of such a possession to another Power.

In that assumption we have now to enquire of what nature is our tenure of this dominion to which we owe so much? What have we to fear for it? How are we to maintain it?

The Heir-Apparent to the English throne and to the Empire of India is now on a visit to that vast territory. There can, therefore, be no more fitting time to answer these questions, for on the adequate comprehension of them rests the possibility of his maintaining the integrity of that empire.

The history of British India is one of the most vivid illustrations of the truth of those general laws wherewith we have prefaced our inquiry which can be produced. It is written in blood. To read the pages of Orme and his successor Kaye is to read the story of

war. It seems the story of one long battle. No respite is afforded to the reader any more than to the foe. From the first chapter to the last—from Plassy to Delhi—the conflict rages, and though in the century of events detailed a marvellous fabric of empire has been raised and consolidated of law and order, the great foundations of force and arms are the conspicuous features of the edifice. The picture represented is of the tangible fact in accordance with the theory of our first chapter. Both theory and practice show no symptom of change. The same dangers threaten, the same only means of defence exists. While strife still plays its part among men, while cupidity prompts the attack and self-preservation seeks its guard, while force holds and pride revolts, war must be. Where millions of people, subjugated by foreign conquerors, live divested of national rights and possessions, which have been transferred to the keeping of aliens for their aggrandisement, there is the theatre of war. If, in addition to the inherent elements of strife, we have demonstrated to us, the slow but steady and sure approach of a third Power towards that theatre; if that Power be our old enemy and present rival, seeking the same advantages that we seek; if we see her year by year, campaign by campaign, gradually but surely improving her position, until she bids fair to envelope ours on all sides, then, unless we

would ignore both theory and facts, we must admit the eventual certainty of war.

To sum up, we observe an increasing rapidity in the movement of events, a stimulus, to all nations yet possessing vitality, to provide means of defence against surprise, the preparation of all warlike material and appliances and the organisation of armies on a scale never before attempted or approached, enormous wealth still accumulating within narrow limits in the hands of a nation at once the most aggressive in disposition and weakest in material power, a cause of disturbance ever threatening the balance of power in Europe in the impending dissolution of Turkey whose existence is an anomaly and an anachronism in the present age, a ferment in the minds of men loosening all social bonds and barriers of thought, a corruption of morals flagrant alike in political, commercial, and social affairs such as is always seen to precede convulsion; discontent and sedition, rife in classes considerably above the mob both in intelligence and influence. All these are signs of war. Finally we have the weak point, the exposed and unguarded opening in our armour, clear and distinct to all the world, which invites attack. We have an empire no longer insular yet maintained defenceless by insular traditions and prejudices.

We are at a strategical disadvantage with our

great rival in Asia which is rapidly increasing. We have not only no army commensurate with our needs and position, but our whole system of recruiting is radically faulty and ill adapted to its purpose. Time so essential now to us for the raising and instruction of troops is frittered away in discussion, not of the main points of reform, but of frivolous trivialities, while the whole scheme demands remodelling. For if the laws which ever since the world's story began have produced war are not now suddenly and by a miracle suspended, if the passions of men have not now ceased to bring forth their accustomed fruit, then is war certain except in the alternative of national ruin, slavery, and the fall of the British Empire.

A growing conviction of the imminence of conflict is to be observed pervading minds which hold the most mutually opposed opinions. Cardinal Manning forebodes a deluge of war over Europe as a direct chastisement from God for irreverence and infidelity. Victor Hugo predicts the same event as arising from the defeat and wrongs of France. The author of 'The Great Game' anticipates a general attack on England after the revolt of her colonies consequent on weakness and decay. The author of 'The Battle of Dorking' illustrated by a brilliant fiction the vague sentiment of the public, and the extraordinary popularity of that work was due entirely to the subtle sense of danger

which is still visible in the utterances of the Press though its cause is ill ascertained and its nature ill understood.

Our object now is to resolve the vague fears, to determine the precise nature of the peril, to demonstrate the character of the menace offered to us, to display the point of attack and the means of defence. To do this we must consider in detail the respective positions of Great Britain and Russia in Asia from the military point of view.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRATEGICAL POSITION.

[THE sketch rapidly drawn in this and the following chapter of the Russian progress in Central Asia was published in India between two or three years ago. Sir Henry Rawlinson's recent work, 'England and Russia in the East,' renders it now almost a work of supererogation. But the copious information, the lucid arrangement of facts, and the ability with which they are set forth in that most important and valuble publication, only serve to confirm in every particular the views which were formed quite independently, from mere attention to current history, and the sources of knowledge concerning Central Asia, open to me in common with the public at large. The notes which I have extracted from Sir Henry Rawlinson's work, show how nearly identical are the opinions I have ventured to express, with those of that accomplished writer and statesman.]

THE object of Strategy has been correctly defined to be the placing of an army in such a position that at the time of collision with an enemy it shall possess a relative advantage.

If for the word 'army,' we substitute 'nation,' in the above definition, then the object of its rulers in regard to strategical position should be to establish its frontiers so as to secure such relative advantage over the neighbouring states.

As a great maritime Power, holding by force of arms a vast dominion many thousand miles from our centre, the base of all our operations in Asia is at present the sea. Two-thirds of our whole Indian border are encircled by the ocean, viz. to the south, south-east and south-west. While we possess a maritime supremacy we are secure there. Of the remaining third, the portion lying to the east is covered by an immense tract of mountain and forest held by savage tribes incapable but of the pettiest mischief, rendering our right flank quite secure from serious invasion. There thus remains for consideration only the state of the lines which form our north and north-west frontier.

These extend along the bases of the Sulieman and Himalaya mountains, and here alone we are in contact with other Powers whom we are forced to regard with watchfulness and precaution.

To the north-west of Hindustan are countries inhabited by people fierce, warlike, fanatical, and bitterly hostile to us. In their present condition they are poor, ill-armed, and disunited. Mahomedans thoroughly

imbued with the bigotry and martial zeal of the founder of their religion, their hand is against every man's, but they are not incapable of combination. Their country is in a military point of view one of the strongest in the world, their government one of the weakest and worst. Of the states included in this general description Afghanistan is singly of importance as a kingdom. Belochistan is an aggregate of small principalities, while the Afreedies and other tribes immediately on our border own allegiance to none, are invariably at feud one with another, and, turbulent and unruly, are too weak to become of themselves dangerous to our peace.

To the north the State of Nepal is noteworthy, being held by a people naturally warlike, and of the most admirable material for soldiery. They are bigoted Hindoos, and though their fanaticism is of a different and weaker kind than that of Mahomedans, they are capable of being roused to strong animosity against us in respect to one of our customs—the slaughter of kine. This country is also mountainous, easy of defence by the possessors, and difficult for offensive operations from the plains. Their Government is at present purely personal, and powerful only from the rare ability and energy of its real ruler and titular prime minister.

Between our territories and Belochistan, Afghanistan, and Nepal, our frontier lies along the foot of the

great mountain chains named above. The two former states are conterminous, but between the east of Afghanistan and the west of Nepal a tract of hill country intervenes, which is occupied partly by Cashmere, a dependency of our own, and partly by minor hill states peopled by tribes wholly unwarlike who are under our protection. The province of Ladak, which lies between the boundaries of the Chinese Empire and ours, is a tract consisting wholly of the loftiest mountains and plateaux, having an average elevation of fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, and may be left out of farther consideration in a strategical disquisition, when it is ascertained to be, as it undoubtedly is, wholly unfitted to be the theatre of war.

A frontier which thus runs, as ours is seen to do, along the foot of a range of mountains, divides nations which differ radically in the character of their respective countries. On the one side a hilly region, where all military operations are impeded greatly by natural obstacles, where the population is scanty, where the cultivation is proportionally far less than in the plains, where the roads, communications from town to town, village to village, are fewer and more difficult to traverse, and where consequently a poverty of material resources is entailed.

Yet the hill people have generally the advantage of their lowland neighbours in muscular development,

physical strength, and the robustness of person and mind which tend to make good soldiers; the difficulties in the way of centralisation of government, aid in preserving social communities as detached tribes among whom internecine war is common, and thus, though comparatively poor, weak in numbers, and deficient in organisation, these highlanders have usually a fierce and reckless military spirit, warlike habits, and render themselves formidable to the dwellers in the plains. It is principally in the character of marauders that they appear, *i.e.* more as invaders with a temporary purpose of robbery, that they descend from their hills as from a fastness, the strength of which they know and appreciate, upon the wealth of the open country, than as having any purpose of permanent conquest; their predatory habits, and want of union and discipline, almost precluding them from success in regular warfare.

On the other side, the condition of the inhabitants of the lowland country is the very reverse of the above. Their population is numerous, their communications are easy, their government strong, their resources and their wealth great, their wars, and consequently their armies, are on a greater scale, their combination is extensive, and their national power far more complete and available for offence or defence.

Thus the relative attitude of the two descriptions

of nations to one another is found to be this. That while the border is generally liable to sudden forays and aggressive disturbances from the hills, the more important expeditions on a large scale are always undertaken from the plains, and the reprisals of the latter are generally more bloody and mischievous than the raids which provoked them.

On the whole, then, the highlanders suffer most, for while the organised forces from below often penetrate deeply into their country, inflicting heavy losses on their impoverished people, the peace of the plains is seldom disturbed beyond the borders to the depth to which raiders can penetrate and retire within a day's space.

Notwithstanding, it is almost always found so irksome to the lowlanders to be perpetually exposed to attack from the hills, that sooner or later invasion upon them for the purpose of permanent conquest and annexation by the wealthier power is resorted to. This general description will apply in the case of states that are independent, unaffected by other Powers, and whose political relations with each other are the mere results of proximity and the natural laws adverted to.

But complexities of the greatest importance arise if either state in this relative position to its neighbours is in the hands of a foreign Power greater than either. If both should be so circumstanced the aspect of affairs

becomes greatly altered, and the modifications which are produced by extraneous causes in their policy must be considered and studied apart from the mere questions relating to the states themselves. The consequences of the changes which then take place are altogether in favour of the party holding the hill districts. For the paucity in numbers of this ceases to hamper the masters of resources beyond it, the difficulties of internal communication are greatly lessened by the aids of science and wealth. Disunited action is replaced by a vigorous and centralised authority, military energies are concentrated and judiciously utilised and guided, and numerical inferiority removed by the addition of foreign and powerful contingents. Then, natural advantages of position and warlike aptitude get their full scope. The first of these is the possession of what are termed in military parlance 'the issues of the frontier.' We see that a great range of mountains offers physical obstacles to the movements of troops, the roads or lines of communication are restricted in number and lie through defiles whence they are commanded on either hand. Their possessors therefore are, to commence with, favourably situated with regard to their antagonists. The power of initiative is with them. For if an attack be made by the other side, it can only be made at certain well-known and ascertained points, 'passes,' as they are called, through

which ingress for a force with its supplies can alone be possible. But the preparation necessary for the successful assault of such points gives ample warning and time to the defenders. If the two parties are at all equal in numbers and skill there can be no question as to which has the advantage. Again, if the possessors of the mountains having at their back the resources of a great Power strengthened by astute statesmanship and guided by able generalship, take advantage of the initiative and become the assailants, they being absolutely masters of the great ramparts behind which they lie (the taking of which by their adversaries to place themselves only on equal terms would cost an infinity of blood, treasure, and time), can concentrate on any one or more points which they may consider suitable, in perfect secrecy and security, while they can threaten all.[1]

The defenders of the plains are in complete ignorance of all that is going on behind the mountain screen. The appearance of the head of an assailing column from any one of the passes may be either a mere feint or an attack in great force, and there is absolutely nothing to show which is intended. The longer the chain of mountains which forms the frontier the greater the advantage to the holders. For as it is impossible that such a chain of some hundreds of miles

[1] *Vide* Hamley's 'Operations of War.'

long shall run in a perfectly straight line, and as in point of fact such a frontier is invariably found to present salient and re-entering angles, so the irruption of the assailants at one of the former will manifestly place them on the flank of some portion or another of the line of defence. In some instances it may expose this latter to be attacked in rear, threatening the whole line of communications. This advantage is of incalculable importance, not only from its influence in material respects, but in its effects as a moral agent. It is simply impossible for any army to hold with confidence a line of defence so hopelessly compromised.

In the case we have assumed, then, of two equal Powers, each possessing vast resources, and guided by skilful leaders, the one holding the line of mountains is placed at an enormous advantage over the other.

First, it possesses the 'issues of the frontier,' that is, the means of passing the obstacles which are difficult for the other, with ease, celerity, and security; secondly, it can place itself at will on the flank and on the communications of its adversaries; thirdly, it has the power of the initiative and of sudden aggression, so that the outset of hostilities must be to its advantage; lastly, and as a necessary consequence of the above, it forces upon the defenders a vast and perpetual expense in providing the necessary forces to guard against an uncertain contingency, and, at the same

time, compels a dispersion of those forces along a weak and irregular line.

If anything were wanted to add still more unmistakeably to the disadvantages of the defenders so circumstanced, it would be found in their territories being filled with defenceless but wealthy towns, in their possessing but few fortified places of any strength on which to concentrate, in their maintaining a smaller army than their line of defence demands, in the temptation they thus offer to rapacity, and in any elements of disunion and discontent which may pervade their ranks.

That, if our present policy of 'masterly inactivity' be pursued but a very few years more, will be our position relative to Russia. She in possession of the mountains and aggressive, we on the defensive, holding a faulty line on the most unfavourable conditions. All the advantages which a Power adverse to us can possess in regard to strategical position accrue to her with the possession of Turkestan. But little remains to make that complete. The three Khanates, Khiva, Bokhara, and Kokand, are already in the hollow of her hand. Her power consolidated, as it will be swiftly, with the modern rapid march of events, Afghanistan will stand to her in the same relation that Cashmere now holds to us; and although for a time a nominal belt of separation may remain between Russian frontiers and ours,

for all the purposes of strategy in considering the defence of our Indian Empire, there will be none. This is a point altogether overlooked by most writers on the Central Asian question. The idea of defining the northern boundary of a country like Afghanistan by way of fixing the limits of aggression by Russia is, to all having a comprehension of the true state of affairs, the most puerile and absurd that can be conceived.

'Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther,' said the courtiers of Canute to the waves of the sea. So spoke, and with precisely similar result, Lord Granville two years ago to the waves of the mighty flood which is overspreading all Asia. People talked of a 'neutral zone' between two great belligerent Powers, as though neutrality were the normal state of nations, and a natural condition easy to be maintained, the exact reverse of this being the truth. For a state to have any chance of maintaining neutrality between two others at war, it must at least be as powerful as either.

Supposing, however, for the sake of argument, that it were the wish and within the power of Afghanistan to remain neutral, what reason is there to imagine that the causes which all parties unite in asserting to be the springs of Russian action, viz. turbulence and anarchy in her neighbours, will cease to affect the new borders as they affected the old ones. The Afghans are at best as turbulent as the Khivans. If disturbances arise on the

northern boundary of Afghanistan, as they assuredly will arise in the nature of things, we cannot suppose with any semblance of reason that Russia will, out of any deference to us, behave more leniently, more weakly, to the Afghans than she now behaves to the people against whom she is arraying a hundred thousand men in arms. As for treaties, we have a most flagrant instance of their inutility in the last made with this same Power, and the avowed infraction of which at her convenience elicited no sign even of disapprobation either from us or from any other party to it. In the face of this fact it is simply ridiculous to consider a treaty a guarantee of any consequence at all. And yet we have connived practically at the Russian scheme of conquest, and have actually permitted the incorporation of the whole of Turkestan with her empire, on the plea that it 'has been for some years felt by the governments of Russia and England respectively, that it would be conducive to the tranquillity of Central Asia that the two Governments should arrive at an identity of views regarding the line which describes the northern frontier of Afghanistan.' This is simply a roundabout method of expressing the most complete concession to our rival of all she wants, and a renunciation of our own claims to power, in Asia. The words in inverted commas are taken from the Queen's Speech two years ago, when Khiva was only threatened. After that conspicuous

display of weakness, there was little hope that when the next step should be taken, and we should stand at a greater disadvantage than then, we should assert either a dignity that has been tarnished, or a power which is fast departing.

Accordingly we find that the 'next step' of Russia has been taken. The Khanates absorption being nearly completed, it is Merv which is now the object of an expedition. That any line short of the Hindu Kush, embracing all the fertile valleys that lie on its northern slopes, the provinces of Kunduz, Badakahshan, and Balkh, will satisfy Russia, no one can now believe. Herat, thus isolated between the ceded Persian districts of Khorassan and Balkh, must ultimately fall into her hands, and after Herat, Candahar.

But it may be urged that even supposing the Russian frontier pushed to the Hindu Kush there will still remain this belt of mountains between us; that we on the one side of Afghanistan shall still possess the relative position to that state which Russia will occupy on the other. A glance at the map will dispel this illusion. Independently of the enormous accession to her prestige, and the moral effect of her last great and successful advance, the physical difficulties of her farther encroachment will decrease with every step and show in the most marked contrast with those which await us whenever it becomes a necessity to us to take action. For

the great lines of communication from Khiva to Merv, Herat and Candahar, from Bokhara and Samarcund to Balkh and Cabul, are infinitely more facile than any we could seize for our own advance. Thus the issues of the frontier are in other hands than ours, and the fallacy of the optimists who persist in ignoring a danger, the recognition of which would entail the war they deprecate, consists in assuming that this great evil of our position may be disregarded with impunity. With every step of our rival this evil increases. With every mile that her advancing frontier overlaps in its approach to ours, accrues a strategical advantage to her. With her will remain the power of the initiative, with her the power of the choice of place and time for the struggle which we may postpone for a year or two at the price of conceding every point of importance in our relations with her, but which will take place as inevitably as the result of any other natural law.

But we are told to wait till the time for action comes. When will that be? If there be no reason for action now, will there be any when the next boundary line drawn by the next treaty is over-stepped? Precisely the same arguments for waiting then will be applicable when Russia avows her intention of annexing Afghanistan, as serve now for leaving Turkestan to her fate. So that at length by persisting in the course we are now observing, our frontier will be

where it is now, but conterminous with the new Russian border all along its line. Will our advocates of masterly inactivity be content with that position? We may rely upon it that our native subjects will not. Heaven helps those who help themselves is their reading of an old proverb. And anyone with the smallest knowledge of Asiatics must know that such a consummation of policy of inaction as we must have then arrived at would terminate our empire over them, at once and for ever.

If therefore the Millennium has not yet arrived, if wars have not yet ceased on the earth, if the motives underlying all human action have not become wholly inoperative, and humanity itself wholly changed, we must admit the possibility of a war with Russia when our claims in Asia shall conflict. If we admit this possibility we must admit also the necessity for providing against it.

But we cannot provide against war by ignoring its very first principles. The precautions to be taken depend on these. To be in a false strategical position at the outset is a bad augury for success. It would be impossible to imagine any worse than that in which we shall be, if we await Russia's advance up to our present line.

We plume ourselves continually upon our Indian progress. We are constantly boasting of the empire

we have built up in a hundred years. And with some cause. But it has not been by masterly inactivity that it has been so built. Russia has done as much, if not more, since the time of Peter the Great. And while we declare our purpose of living content with what we have taken, she, on the other hand, distinctly avows her purpose of farther aggression, and advances steadily from one point to another. To-day it is Merv, yesterday it was Khiva, to-morrow it will be Herat, and so on. But it does not suit certain of our statesmen or of our journalists to affect to believe either word or deed. They say that we receive friendly assurances when Russia says in so many words that she defies British interference, and they see no harm when she annexes state after state. They talk and write of an identity of policy when Russia makes war in Central Asia and we declare we must have peace at any price. What is the meaning of words if our relative policies are said to be 'identical' when circumstances proclaim them directly adverse?

We are told that we should signify to Russia that with her conquests in Central Asia we have nothing to do, and that we shall not interfere so long as she does not imperil our peace and security within the bounds of India. Is it possible to suppose that peril to us is not involved in every advantage which she gains? If so then the very first and fundamental ideas and

axioms regarding strategy are false, set down in ignorance, and of no force. As might be expected from those who loftily object to logical reasoning, and who start with a foregone conclusion that there can be no danger because they cannot or will not see it, the party for peace at any price is rather divided against itself as to the facts from which its various members argue. One writer on 'Russian menaces' who is derisive about Russophobia, writes that, 'for purposes of aggression Russia is one of the weakest Powers in the world; for a century she has been striving to establish her ascendency over the Khanates of Central Asia, and she has not succeeded in completely conquering one.' 'Towards knitting them together by internal lines of communication she has not of course made a single step.' On the other hand, Captain Spencer, a traveller who has frequently visited Russia, and written much on the state of this empire, both politically and socially, but who conceives that Russian advance will be only a convenience to invalids and bring the blessing of civilisation to the poor benighted inhabitants of Central Asia, writes as follows:—

'We remember the time when there was no other road in the empire than the track over the steppes. This is a thing of the past: the road and the rail, those great civilizers of men, are no longer a novelty, and in a country where labour is cheap, and land may be had

almost for the sake of asking, the cost of their construction is very trifling indeed.

'The reader must not imagine that the latest movement of the Russians, and which seems to have taken the world by surprise, is a mere accidental incident occasioned by an attack of the robber hordes of Khiva and Bokhara on a Russian caravan. No such thing. We know to a certainty that every step taken by the far-seeing rulers of all the Russias from the day of the Great Peter up to the present time, has been part of a regular systematic and organised plan as cleverly imagined and as certain of success as anything that that master of strategy Von Moltke projected during the Franco-German War.

'We have already said that the subjugation of Central Asia has been so well matured as not to leave a doubt on the mind of the most violent "Anti-Russian" of being completely crowned with success.

'Several of the most important Khanates of this vast country have already fallen into the hands of the Russians. Their eagles not only float over Bokhara and Samarcand, but over other Khanates of less note. As to Turkestan, that home of the great Ottoman, their rule is said to be as firmly established as in the Crimea.

'What is to prevent Khiva, the most important of all to our fellow subjects in India, from following the

fate of the rest—a position which would thus give her the entire command of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya, the two great water-ways which unite the whole of Central Asia and Afghanistan with the Caspian and the Sea of Aral?'

(Captain Spencer wrote the above three years ago, and the Russians have taken up that position: Khiva is now in their hands). It is to be observed that the Amu Darya (the Oxus) is navigable from the Sea of Aral upwards to the extent of at least 700 miles.

'Who can doubt,' adds Captain Spencer, 'that Afghanistan will become the boundary of Russia in that direction?' These are the statements and opinions of one specially qualified to judge on the question. That he is not prejudiced by 'Russophobia' is quite clear, for while he says, 'We cannot for a moment imagine that our government will permit the Russians to take Afghanistan,' he adds in the next sentence, 'Sentimental politics are a danger when the fate of an empire is in the scale; we nevertheless profess an opinion that we have in reality nothing to fear from the near approach of Russia to our empire in India.'

So that of those most opposed to our interference and most content with our inaction, the one poohpoohs Russia as an aggressive Power; the other, far better informed, acknowledges the difficulty of opposing her, her power being so great, and yet avers that there is

no danger. If Captain Spencer's experience and observations are to be accepted as grounds for an estimate of Russia's power, then the obvious strategical disadvantages which we have indicated gain a new importance from the testimony of an opponent to our arguments, and we may fairly assume the peril to have been distinctly pointed out.

Then the questions arise. What can we do to avert that peril? How can we best defend ourselves?

To defend a country from invasion it is not right to limit regard to the direct line of the enemy's advance as the only one on which he can be opposed, or of the first importance in considering the dispositions wherewith to meet him.

Our present boundary to the north-west is, as has been seen, so radically ill-placed and bad in a strategical sense under the new circumstances which threaten us, that were we confined to its exclusive regard, the imperative duty of abandoning it would be at once manifest; and as no sane man could think of retreating from it, we should be simply coerced by the instinct of self-preservation to take up the line which we held in 1839 of Candahar, Ghuznee, and Cabul, a proceeding which would be of infinite toil and cost to us of lives and treasure. Nothing, indeed, shows so vividly the decline of our prestige in Asia as the enormously enhanced difficulty we find in undertaking expeditions

which five and thirty years ago were thought little of. If we compare the opposition offered to our troops in their advance upon Afghanistan, before our disaster there, with that which met them in the Umbeyla campaign, twelve years ago, this truth will be disagreeably clear to us.[1]

But we as yet possess a power, as defenders, of checking our adversaries at points other than on this line.

It remains with us at present to be able to threaten the Russian communications from a flank in such a manner as to prevent them from farther advance except at a great risk. And this is a strategical consideration of the highest value.

So far as we know at this time of the course of our negotiations with the Czar's government, the concession of the whole of the vast district called Turkestan, including the country from the Caspian to the confines of China, and from the Sea of Aral to Khorassan, and the course of the Oxus to within a few miles of Balkh, has been determined on. Monstrous as this concession is, involving in fact complete withdrawal from intervention on our part—for Russia for the present can neither want nor ask more—the new empire, for such it is in

[1] *Vide* Sir Henry Rawlinson's 'England and Russia in the East.' Sir Henry would answer Russian occupation of Merv by a British advance on Herat.

dimensions, has still much of it to be conquered, and after conquest to be assimilated, by which term we include all the processes by which annexation is turned to the best account. These processes are rapid, but in the meantime the tax on the Russian resources will be very considerable indeed, going far to monopolise them. While she is thus occupied, therefore, we, on our part, have time to take up our position and make our own move in reply to hers. The value of this time and this opportunity it is absolutely impossible to exaggerate; as impossible as it is to overrate the importance of the move itself.

We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the most stubborn advocates of inactivity hitherto can fail to see now that our very existence must depend on this. We cannot conceive that England will permit herself to be deliberately placed in the false and fatal position which will be hers if she remain supine, and content to rest stolid and immovable during the next few years—very few—while her rival gathers all her forces, energies, and resources together for the next blow.

With diffidence, therefore, and as fully conscious of the momentous character of the step we now propose to take on our future fortunes, we suggest the dispositions essential to our sound strategical relations with our great rival. We propose then to operate on her

right flank, leaving for the time our own present front undisturbed.

Possessing as she does both the western and eastern shores of the Caspian, the southern border of that sea forms a break in the direct line of her communications, the command of which is, however, at present vested in Persia. Few of our readers are probably aware of the extent to which Russian influence prevails in that country. We can assure them, and it is of importance to our arguments, that in all but name and a certain tradition of independence, Persia may be regarded as a feudatory of Russia. And it is only of a yet lingering pride in past power and grandeur that we may take advantage if we will. By demonstrating to Persia that we have the force and the wish to render her truly independent, and so securing such concurrence as it may still be possible for her to give, we might yet constitute the eastern shore of the Caspian the left of Russian advance on India. By the occupation as allies of Teheran and the south bank of the Caspian, we should be in a position to strike in upon the Russian communications with Orenburgh and Krasnovodsk, forcing her thus to form front to her right flank, and exposing her left to the attacks of the revolted Turcoman hordes. With the arrangement of our own bases and lines of communication, the European aspect of the Eastern question must be considered.

The co-operation of Turkey must be obtained—it will hardly be withheld if she understands her present position. Check to Russian progress is in point of fact to her the condition of existence. On a declaration of war, with the sympathy and aid of the Porte, we could invade Georgia from a base established at the south-eastern angle of the Black Sea, gain possession of Tiflis, and connect our line of communication through Elizabetopol, and along the Kur and Arax rivers to the Caspian. This line, or one parallel to it, from Trebizond to Erzeroum and Tabrez, and thence to the Caspian, would probably prove the easiest for supplying our depôts at Teheran. This diversion in the region pointed out would certainly arrest Russian designs in Turkestan. Her Circassian subjects would be prompted to revolt; the whole Mussulman population of Asia Minor would be aroused; the spirit of fanaticism would be set on fire; and Russia would find herself opposed on all points with a vigour and audacity which she has not calculated upon.[1]

[1] This was written two years ago. The march of events has been so rapid since that the course then advocated would be only now possible by the most strenuous efforts of ours backed by the most hearty co-operation of Turkey and Persia.

'The Shah's government (at the time of the Crimean War) naturally expected, if we were in earnest in our desire to cripple Russia's power in Asia, that we should land an efficient British force in Mingrelia, co-operate with Shamil, who was eager for action, raise the discontented population of Georgia and Armenia, subsidise Persia, and

Another line of operations is also open to us, something similar to one proposed in 1854, as follows:—Assembling a force of 25,000 men,[1] half European and half native troops, at Bushire, we could march it to Tabrez and support it by a Turkish army in two columns of seven or eight thousand men each, to occupy Zohrab and Sulimaneh, and to connect the line of operations between Tabrez and Bagdad. There could be three lines of strategic advance resting on the Tigris and Persian Gulf—one from Bushire by Shiraz, Ispahan, Hamadan to Tabrez; another from Bagdad by Karkook to Sulimaneh; and a third from Bagdad through Kermanshah and Maragha to Tabrez. These lines in our hands, Persia would be relieved of Russian pressure.

We thus broadly indicate the strategic alternatives open to us if the direct advance of our north-west frontier be considered too hazardous. The only point of detail to which it is necessary to advert in this place is in regard to the climate of the countries wherein the operations will be carried on. The plains must be traversed in winter, and the army should summer in the mountainous districts. The force should arrive on the Russian frontier about the beginning of May. If

finally turn our Asiatic strength to account by bringing a powerful contingent into the field from India through Baghdad and Kurdistan.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. ii.

[1] Assuming that we first put our armies on a footing which should enable us to carry out a plan of defence.

Georgia were selected as the theatre of war, the army should winter at Tiflis.

We would draw attention here to the state of affairs in Persia previous to the Crimean War. Sir Justin Shiel, the envoy at Teheran in 1852, wrote :— 'With the Russians at Asterabad, having the Caspian and Volga in their rear, it seems almost impossible to credit that any overwhelming obstacle exists against a demonstration of Russia in Afghanistan.'

Those who deride 'Russophobia' find it possible to credit the existence of such an obstacle now when the whole eastern shore of the Caspian has been taken up, and the whole of the intervening country between that sea and the Afghan frontier has been virtually ceded to the Czar! But the truth is, that between the 'Russophobists' and their opponents all the arguments are on one side and all the vituperation on the other. The former are 'insane' and 'ridiculous,' but not a fact they assert is disputed, not a step in their argument is refuted. The admirers of masterly inactivity are constantly referring to the occasions on which Russia has been baffled, and yet deny the necessity of further resort to the means by which she was baffled. They say that Russia has tried to take Herat and failed; but they ignore the fact that Persia, well-nigh in vassalage to Russia, did take Herat, and was only forced to give it up by war.

They say that Russia has failed to take Constantinople, but they ignore the fact that the two leading Powers in Europe were united and engaged two years in war to bring about that failure.

The Hungarian traveller, M. Vambéry, has recently asserted that 'Tashkend, Khodjand, Samarcand, and Bokhara are but inseparable links to the long chain of Russian conquests, which will certainly be extended to Herat and Candahar.' There is no living authority on Central Asian politics more entitled to respect than Vambéry, and yet without any reason being adduced for the opinion, his statement is styled 'ridiculous' by the party for inactivity. In short, we are 'to rest and be thankful:' ignoring our old traditions, reversing the policy which gave us empire, we are to go to war no more. We are to accept defiance and threats as 'friendly assurances;' we are to recruit our finances by diminishing military expenditure, and to check our population by enforcing the 'morality of married life.'

When such doctrines as these find popular acceptance they betoken decay in the State. We can only hope that the vitality evinced by the occasional excitement manifested in England when the truth occurs to her may master the general spread of the disease.

Never in her history has she had more just cause for rousing herself to self-defence than now; not more even in the days when she held the balance of power

in Europe in her hands, and spent ten millions sterling per annum to maintain it. The Crimean War was forced upon an unwilling Government and Court by popular feeling. There is just a possibility that the same cause may again prevail. If the Ottoman power was then as a 'sick man' to whose estates the Czar presented himself as the rightful and sole t is not less so now; while the state of Persia may be likened to one absolutely moribund, and in whose house the self-elected heir holds possession.

Man will act after his kind, let the idealists and the optimists prate as they will. Not all the science of the Syracusan philosopher, who boasted that he could move the world, availed to save him from the sword of the rough soldier of Marcellus. The same means which in the days of Themistocles served to make a small state great are still those which maintain an empire great. The thing that hath been, that shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun.

If more evidence were wanted to enforce the arguments by which, through a long train of reflection, we have sought to show the effects of Russia's progress on us, it will be found in Russia's own admissions.

The Memoir published in 1873, which was written in 1854 by the Russian General Duhamel, and laid before the Emperor Nicholas, elaborately sets forth in straightforward terms the exact designs which

we have attributed to our rival in this and the following chapter. All that we infer from the evidence as probably her course is distinctly asserted in that document to be that which best befits her national plan of ultimate and sole sovereignty in Asia.

The same roads for its attainment are pointed out by Russia as those we now indicate; the same gates are named, the same means to be employed, the same dangers to the English, advantages to the Russians, dwelt upon; the excitement to disaffection of our subjects, the estrangement from us of the neighbouring states, so that they may be bribed, bullied or cajoled into alliance with Russia, are all detailed, as processes to be carried out, as plainly as we have detailed them.

Here we pause, feeling that if the distinct avowal of an enemy, followed by the putting into practice of each recommendation therein made, step by step, can attract neither heed nor regard, expostulation is vain.

It may be that our cup is full; that, entering the temple of the Eumenides, we are for past national crimes bereft of reason, as were those who, unrepentant, visited the temple of Achaia. All unmasked, but unheeded and unchecked, the tide of invasion flows on, widening and deepening as it advances, sapping the foundations of empires on either hand—of Persia in the south, of Turkey to the west. By what magical or miraculous process it is to be stayed short of our own has

not been explained by those who complacently lisp that the Russophobists are insane.

England, to whom the events of each day are full of immeasurable significance, is blinded by the glare of gold and lulled to fatal slumber by the opiates of luxury and ease. A little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep, though over her disarmed and prostrate form looms the mailed might of a foe forceful as herself, when she too stood armed under shield.

Yet she will not awake; and if ever the clang of steel seems to reach for an instant the ear to which it was once familiar, and to rouse the sleeper from lethargy and oblivion, voices fatal as the Syrens' are raised to drown the warning ring, hands treacherous as Circe's are forward to proffer the poisoned draught.

And under its influence the strength of England is departing, never to be put forth again, or only when too late, when defenceless and at the mercy of the merciless, she will match her unguarded frame, her disarmed hand, against armour of proof and practised sword. And then the end will be very near.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MENACE FROM WITHOUT.

THERE are certain propositions, the truth of which men acknowledge in the abstract, and yet which they invariably contest or ignore in the concrete. We all admit, for example, as a philosophic axiom, that there is no permanence in any earthly condition, no perfect rest in any form of matter. Whether we regard the surfaces of continents or examine the arrangement of particles in the minutest substances, we observe in everything alike ceaseless movement. A piece of wrought iron has its atoms in constant motion, so that in time its state changes quite irrespectively of outward influences from the fibrous to the crystalline structure, and the properties of a metal which is our proverbial type of stability become wholly altered. The shore line of all countries varies its direction under the action of great forces which are producing here upheaval, there depression. Throughout the universe, the same great law of unrest seems to prevail;

whole systems of stars being known to be in motion, shifting their relative positions with great rapidity, while none can be perceived to be stationary.

We recognise the law, we admit its action, and we see and feel its effects. But in matters affecting most materially our most vital interests we are ever theorising and acting on hypotheses which can have no foundation while the law of unrest exists. We are constantly imagining permanence and stability where they do not and cannot dwell.

If the physical surface of this world of ours is itself changing with time, if the shores of oceans shift their crumbling edges with the hours which they mark and we forget, what shall we say of those imaginary lines of demarcation which men profess to trace out between nation and nation, state and state, and call frontiers, fencing them in with treaties more perishable in their obligations than the frail materials on which they are recorded, marking with pigmy symbols the world which we map out and part between us to-day, which yesterday was otherwise mapped out, and which shall to-morrow be re-mapped and re-parted. Shall we make these our types of the immutable? Some of our modern British statesman bid us do so. We are gravely assured by our guides, philosophers, and friends of this order, in direct opposition to every lesson of the past, that our boundaries for the future

are and must be fixed, inviolable and never more liable to change. We are told that 'the configuration of the Peninsula itself defines and decides the limits of our Indian empire, and that we cannot overstep them without committing the gravest blunder from the political, military, and moral point of view.'

To demonstrate the truth of this remarkable assertion we have two instances of the limits of empire thus determined offered to our observation, in the frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia. We examine the map of this continent, and we trace upon it the political changes on its surface within a very recent historical period.

All countries display in their history a complete similarity of origin, the rudimentary state of each being a group of independent tribes derived, as we have pointed out, from individual families.

This nearly primitive condition may be seen at the present day among the Afreedies and cognate tribes on the north-west border; it exists on a great scale in Africa, and generally in those parts of the world where progress has been slow. The different stages of the process by which amalgamation is reached, up to the formation of great and powerful states having one national life, one language, and one common political interest, are invariably and distinctly marked by war. Even when the point is reached at which Europe now

stands, and powers co-exist capable awhile of maintaining independence, there is every reason to suppose from analogy that it is not final. A lull takes place from time to time in the progress of war and conquest, when the various powers are tolerably evenly balanced; but very little suffices to disturb the equilibrium, and from time to time the collapse of some weaker state shows the external pressure and the continuous action of the same forces which have been at work from the commencement of human history. But while the balance of power is for a while maintained at home, abroad the faculty of expansion, the inherent attribute of every healthy organisation—growth in fact, which is as visible in the life of a nation as in that of a man—must find an outlet, and it does so, according to a well-known law, in the direction of the weakest resistance. So the more advanced states force their way into the remoter and less compacted kingdoms of the earth.

First pushes his way the scientific explorer, then follows the missionary, next the trader, and close on their heels the soldier, and with war commences the process which we call civilisation.

It is this faculty of expansion, this growth which from the little centre of the British Isles has filled up with its exuberance the whole of North America; which is extending over an island as vast as a continent in Australia; which has spread over great tracts of

Africa; and which, last but not least, has occupied an immense territory in Asia. It is the same faculty of growth which in the case of Russia has spread her empire over more than half of Europe and two-thirds of Asia.

The question now arises whether we have any reasons to believe or to assume that this process of growth in either nation has ceased, or that it no longer acts with the same inevitable results which have attended it hitherto. Are there any symptoms of languishing or feebleness in the function observable? In regard to Russia, so far from this being the case, direct evidence to the contrary is vivid to our eyes, if only we will not turn them away from its contemplation; aggression by Russia on the states of Central Asia not very far from our own possessions being in full operation while we gaze. Only a few years ago Russian statesmen averred that with the possession of Khokand her ambition would be completely satisfied, the measure of her progress in Central Asia finally determined. To-day Yarkund is threatened. Two years ago Khiva was invaded, not for conquest, simply to establish order on the frontier.

This state, known best by the name of its capital, Khiva (but more properly Khorissin or Khorisin, and by some writers called Oorgunj, from the name of a former capital), was two years ago the last remaining

independent Khanate of Turkestan. It is now a Russian province.[1]

As the present aspect of affairs is a good example of the method in which a great design of Russia, carefully elaborated for a long period, is being wrought, we will examine this attentively first, and then proceed to consider the origin, scope, and effects of the scheme as a whole, of which the annexation of Khiva is a sample, and which has been prosecuted without intermission for the last century and a half. That annexa-

[1] 'It was generally understood in the autumn of 1873 that, with the avowed object of punishing these so-called incorrigible marauders (the Tekkehs), a Russian force was to be marched from the Caspian along the "Attock," or "skirts" of the Kuren-digh to Akhal and Merv, and the co-operation of Persia was believed to have been promised by the Shah. . . . The Tekkehs were thereby alarmed by these rumours, and by the threatening messages received from Colonel Ivanoff at Petro-Alexandrofsk, and began to cast about for assistance. . . . . They first offered their allegiance to Persia . . . . and when repelled they invoked the protection of Afghanistan. Shir Ali, being thus obliged to consider the troubles which menaced the Merv and Herat frontiers, sought counsel of the Viceroy of India. And in due course, at his suggestion, he represented the case to Russia, pointing out in firm but courteous language that a Russian expedition against Merv . . . . would lead to complications on the Herat frontier. . . . . Gortschakoff, in replying to Lord Granville's letter on this subject, took no notice of the eventualities hinted at, but simply said that "if these turbulent tribes were to commit acts of aggression or brigandage against us, we should be compelled to punish them." Now, as it was well known that such a pretext for interference would never be wanting, the mere disclaimer of any present intention to attack the tribes could not be considered re-assuring, ... in the meantime local affairs have been leading up to the *dénoûment* with steady and unfailing precision.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. iv. p. 326.

tion was long the avowed object of Russian ambition. In 1819 Mouravieff wrote, 'The establishment of a post of ours at Khiva would shake to its foundations the commercial prosperity of the masters of the sea, the English, in their own Indian dominions.' Its possession and the construction of a military cantonment at Charjooee, gives Russia the complete command of the route lying between the Caspian Sea and the Indus, easiest of all for communication with India, viz., that viâ Asterabad, Herat, and Candahar, and the occupation of Merv, which will probably have taken place before these lines are printed, completes her communications both to the west and to the north, with the Caspian and with the Aral seas.

The route from Asterabad was that projected by Napoleon in the event of his success against Russia, when he intended to have combined French and Russian armies along this line against us; it was also the route determined on in a project for the invasion of India laid before Catherine II. The possession of Charjooee and Merv would make it impossible to oppose Russian forces along that line, flanked as it is by those posts.

The possession of Khiva by Russia, besides establishing her permanent and complete grasp of Turkestan, consolidates her Asiatic dominions and exposes the great Persian province of Khorassan to her grasp, serving

to overawe the Shah's authority in the east as completely as she already does in the west. The steps taken from time to time to accomplish this, to Russia most desirable and indeed avowed object, are progressing so rapidly that any interference to prevent Persia from becoming a Russian province both in fact and name cannot be delayed a year.[1]

In 1810 Russia's boundary in Central Asia was the Araxes; to-day her outposts approach Merv.[2] At the instigation of Russia, her forces being on both occasions led by Russian officers, Persia has twice besieged Herat in Afghanistan, in the years 1837 and 1855. Herat in Persian hands would be practically Russian. This city, on the high road above alluded to, is the *entrepôt* of Persia, Turkestan, Cabul, and India, and is

[1] 'The plan of a railway from the frontier to Tabrez, originated by a private company, has been pressed on the acceptance of the Shah's government by the full weight of Russian official influence against his Majesty's wishes, and in flagrant disregard of the rights of Baron Reuter, the annulment of whose concession, although formally notified by Persia, has never been accepted either by the individual or by his protecting government. There can be no question that the interference of the Russian Government . . . . has given a rude shock to the Shah's independent authority.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. vi.

[2] 'There is one point—indeed, the first of the whole Eastern Question—which must never be lost sight of—*we cannot afford to expose Herat to the risk of being taken by Russian coup-de-main.* If a Russian force is sufficiently near to threaten the safety of the key of India, we must also have a British force sufficiently near to protect it.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. vi.

the key to the latter dominion. In 1852 Russia under pretext of desiring to put a stop to the struggle then going on between Kokan (or Khokand) and Bokhara formed a project to occupy the upper source of the Syr Daria by a military force, to subdue the Turcoman hordes on the eastern banks of the Caspian, to connect the Syr Daria and Khirgiz-Siberian lines by a series of forts, and in fact to transfer the Orenburgh and Siberian frontier to the new military boundaries. This plan was carried out with complete success. In 1867 Russia had passed the Syr Daria and was in possession of Khokand and at war with Bokhara, whose capital fell into her hands when she placed her cantonments on the line of the Oxus.[1] In 1871 a Russian military expedition from Krasnovodsk Bay on the Caspian was pushed to within eighty miles of Khiva, and in the same year a reconnaissance in force, consisting of 4,000 men with twenty guns, was made from Krasnovodsk to the river

[1] 'The history of the Khivan expedition affords an apt illustration of the normal course of Russian progress in the East. Up to the year 1869 there was no special grievance against Khiva. . . . . When the first Russian detachment crossed the Caspian from Petrofsk to Krasnovodsk in November 1869, the object of the expedition was stated to be entirely commercial. . . . . In an international point of view, indeed, Russia had no more right to appropriate the eastern shores of the Caspian than she had to appropriate Ghilan and Mazenderan. . . . . One thing is certain that the descent of Russian troops on the Turkoman coast was an arbitrary act of power, which, according to the law of nations, admitted of no justification.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. vi.

Attrek and up it. In 1873 an open rupture with Khiva was followed by the march of three columns of infantry against the capital. This expedition was also attended with complete success, and thus the three Khanates—Khokand, Bokhara, and Khiva—are now to all intents and purposes integral parts of the Russian empire. She has thus passed the desert tracts that but a few years ago interposed between her ambition and the fertile provinces immediately contiguous to Afghanistan, the districts closest to that country are wealthy and fully capable of maintaining large armies, and the object of Russia, which was to establish a new base of operations to the south of the immense tracts of desert steppe which she had to traverse, is thoroughly accomplished.[1]

This year Merv on the one side, and Yarkund on the other, are menaced.

The possession of the three Khanates, then, is not only a very material accession of wealth and security to Russia, but it has paved the way to her advance on Yarkand south-east, and to Herat south-west. It

[1] 'By obtaining the whole of the right bank of the river (Oxus) from Gugutli downwards Russia entirely isolates Khiva from Bokhara —as in a former instance her possession of Samarcand had dissevered Bokhara from Kokand, and she is further enabled to connect her extreme post on the Oxus by an arbitrary line with the Samarcand frontier to the north of Bokhara, so as to include the whole area of the Kizil-Kum steppe in the province of Turkestan.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. vi.

secures beyond all chance of hazard the great highways of inland Asiatic communication; and finally, it renders the watershed between the Indian Ocean and the Caspian and Aral seas the boundary between Russia and her only rival Great Britain.

No one can fail to perceive the enormous advantage her possessions here must confer in the event of complications in Europe, in enabling her directly to threaten our Indian Empire in a way which we shall presently notice, and so to create a diversion which will compel us to lock up a large portion of our military resources in that country; and those complications are rising and approaching nearer to us day by day and closing upon us fast.

In 1860 Russia, with the forethought which throughout distinguishes her policy, and which forms so notable a contrast with our own, requested permission from China to establish a cantonment at Gumeh on the road to Karakorum between Yarkund and Khoten. An order came accordingly from Pekin allotting to Russia some ground at that place. Gumeh commands the entrance of the Karakorum and Changchenmo passes.

Eastern Turkestan is, as we have shown, rich enough to support an army, and Russia in 1873 had thought it worth her while to conclude a commercial treaty with Yarkund. The tracts of country lying between

that state and the province of Ladak, belonging to Cashmere, our own dependency, are sterile and waste in the extreme, and the road traversed by caravans is one of great difficulty from the scarcity of supplies and from the great altitude of this region, the highest passes in the world being crossed by this route.

But it is not impracticable. Russia has sufficiently demonstrated her power of overcoming physical obstacles of route, where the object to be gained is a fertile province beyond them, and the presence of Russian troops at Leh would be marked with an effect on India, and indeed on all Asia, which would amply repay her for the trouble and expense of such a feat.

We perceive from year to year a steady and uninterrupted advance in the progress of the aggressive scheme, with a perfectly reasonable and obvious aim avowed from the beginning. Taking Khokand as the present left of the Russian main line coming from the north, and assuming that the menace to Yarkund has its significance in that scheme, we observe that, difficult as all the routes to India are from that point, in 1543 Mirza Hyder, with Secunder Khan of Kashgar, invaded and took Cashmere, coming by the Karakorum and Leh route.

What has been done once may of course be done again. An extension of the Russian line to the left, i.e. to the east of Khokand, would make it not impossible

for Russia to repeat that course. Khokand commands the high road between Kashgar and Khoten. The present caravan routes from Khokand to India are three.

1. Viâ Bokhara, Balkh, and Cabul to Peshawur, 1,136 miles, generally traversible by wheeled carriages, but crossing the Hindoo Coosh range of mountains, the passes of which are closed during seven months of the year.

2. By Samarcand, Budukshahan, Pamir to Cabul, or to Swat, and thence to Peshawur, this route crosses the Pamir steppes at 17,000 feet above the sea, and is most difficult.

3. By the Terek pass, fit for laden mules through the Mustagh range to Yarkund, and thence to Leh over the Karakorum, and from Leh over the Zojjila pass into Cashmere. This route is 1,300 miles over the highest passes in the world, and through wide tracts of desert furnishing nothing for food even of baggage animals. Yet, as has been mentioned, it has been made a road of successful invasion.

But even if we assume that east of Bameean, and the passes through the Hindoo Coosh there is no road which a large modern army could traverse, and taking it for granted that the Russian left does not threaten us in any way, and if therefore we restrict the field to the two great highways before alluded to, terminating

respectively in the Khyber and Bolan passes, we shall find sufficient grounds for serious consideration.

The three Khanates forming the sources of supplies to a force having its base on the Oxus, and having depôts at Charjooee and Balkh, Cabul would be an easy point of attack. Candahar lies open to approach from Herat, which town is now threatened from two points, viz., from the Attrek river on the west, and from Merv on the north. On any of these roads the physical difficulties are by no means great. The invasion of Afghanistan to a Power holding the whole continent of Asia to the north of her frontier will present no difficulties whatever, and there can be no possibility of doubt that within a period to be reckoned by months Afghanistan will be the only state between Russian frontier and our own.

The arguments against our establishing a paramount influence over Afghanistan have been based chiefly on the following considerations:

1. The poverty of that country, rendering the maintenance of a foreign army in it excessively costly.

2. The turbulent nature of the people and their fanaticism.

3. The exceedingly difficult nature of so mountainous a region for military operations.

The answer to these objections is simply that necessity knows no law. It would be cheaper to

maintain a British force in Afghanistan than to lose India, or even to be involved in a costly war for its possession. We are at least as capable of fighting Afghans as of fighting Russians, and if we have not some generals as good as General Kaufman in conducting military operations in a difficult country the sooner we seek them the better.

For if we show that we are unable or unwilling to exert influence in that country, what shall prevent Russia from establishing her own, when she has enveloped that state on every side? When our gigantic northern rival has her influence paramount over Turkey, Persia, and China, is in complete possession of the Khanates, and has therefore the whole continent north of the Hindoo Coosh within a ring fence, what could the single and distracted country of Afghanistan do against the overwhelming pressure which will be brought to bear upon her?

But besides the practical objections above mentioned to our interference with Afghanistan, our statesmen find moral considerations against it. We are asked how English gentlemen with justice and truth on their lips can reconcile themselves to gratuitous invasion of an unoffending country which, although a prey of anarchy and civil war within its own borders, has in all parties a strong desire of amity with the British Government.

Again we reply, necessity knows no law. But though our military occupation of Afghanistan might embroil us with its people, it is not impossible that if the object sought by it—being the forestalling of Russian ambition—were plainly set forth to the Ameer and his people, we might be rather welcomed as deliverers than opposed as foes. We are told that the hope of territorial acquisition, of adding to our commercial advantages, and the possible advance of other Powers, have been long dismissed as reasons for an aggressive policy. We might just as well be told that the Millennium had arrived. 'Possible' advance? Since when has Russia ceased to advance?

Have the circumstances which are admitted on all sides to have originated our past policy, Russia's past policy, changed in any one respect? What is Russia's own plea for advancing? We read in the St. Petersburg 'Golos' of August 31, 1875, 'This incident'—the breaking out of rebellion in Khokand—'affords fresh 'proof of the anarchical nature of the Central Asian Khanates, and of the difficulty we experience in allowing any of them to remain independent. Englishmen, with their Indian experience to teach them Oriental politics, know how very difficult it is to avoid the acquisition of fresh territory in the East, however much they may be induced to charge us with the lust of conquest. Every commotion in the Khanates exercises a

disturbing influence on our territory acquired by the blood of our gallant troops. Is it possible for us to stand upon ceremony with khans unable to maintain order in their dominions and to secure the execution of our agreements concluded with them? It would seem to be high time, and essential to the interest of the people themselves, to do away with the so-called independence of Khokand and Kashgar considering that this very peculiar sort of independence is the constant source of rebellion and strife.'

There is the argument in Russia's own words. It will be idle to affect that it will not hold as good in regard to Afghanistan as it held to Khiva, as it holds to Khokand or Yarkund, or any other state in Russia's path. Is there less turbulence on our border? Is the world at large, far or near, disarming? Does the din of arms resound less either over Europe or Asia that we alone have a right to remain supine and passive? [1]

'Moral considerations?' When have these had any

[1] '"Russia," it was stated, "has played a very successful as well as a very safe game in the late proceedings. When she prompted the Shah to undertake the siege of Herat, she was certain of carrying an important point, however the expedition terminated. If Herat fell, which there was every reason to expect, then Candahar and Cabul would certainly have made their submission. Russian influence would thus have been brought to the threshold of India. . . . . If, on the other hand, England interfered to save Herat, she was compromised, not with the mere court of Mahomed Shah, but with Persia as a nation. By interfering to save Herat, and by thus checking for the moment the advance of Russian influence towards India," it was further said,

effect whatever on the course of nations? To attempt to apply ethical principles to the measurement or apprehension of the facts of state policy, is of about the same practical utility as to attempt to teach horsemanship by geometry or mechanics, to evoke light by optics, or to square the circle with a foot rule. The means and the end are irreconcileable. Was ever war yet that both sides of the combatants failed to assure themselves that justice and right were on their side? The language of obedience to the Divine Will, the arrogation of the purest moral motives, is indeed invariably made use of in set terms by every Power that attacks its neighbour. Russia used it in the partition of Poland, Prussia used it in the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein. But no one seriously contends that it is not utterly false. Not once in all the world's story, from the Hebrew war with the Philistines down to the last annexation of Alsace, do we find one trace of the precepts of morality affecting the relations between a strong state at war with a weaker, or determining the respective attitudes of the conqueror and the conquered. And it is sheer hypocrisy to represent them as of any

"England has made an enemy of every province whose troops were engaged in the campaign." . . . .

'Subsequent events verified to a remarkable extent not only the accuracy of the Russian calculations, but the sincerity with which they were declared.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. i.

weight in the matter. That, and that only which truly determines those relations is the law of aggression, which is to life what the law of gravitation is to matter, and may be summed up in two words—'*Væ victis.*' Woe to the Power which neglects its arms and fails to foster the spirit to rightly wield them. When barbarism and civilisation meet, when anarchy comes into immediate contact with order, the natural results can only be averted by the abdication of the higher power from its proper ascendency, and the cessation of its proper function; and such abdication will be surely followed by its certain penalty. If we do not establish a Protectorate in Afghanistan, Russia certainly will do so; and from the day she does so our position in India will be untenable except by her sufferance. And this, not only from the strategical position we have shown, but from the political circumstances which day by day discover themselves.

Thirty years ago, the outposts of the British and Russian empires in Asia were respectively Loodiana and Astracan. Looking at the map to-day, why shall we suppose that the forces which have been ceaselessly at work not only for these past thirty years, but for three hundred years, for the past ages since the history of man can be traced, have ceased to work now. If ethics are to be the rules of our procedure they would demand not only that we should not advance,

but would require of us restitution. Shall we admit this? Yet it would be hard to find one ethical consideration that restrains our advance into Afghanistan that should not have equally prevented us from annexing the Punjab.

We are told, again, that our past course has been due to the configuration of the Peninsula. That configuration did not hinder the old Mogul emperors from taking up the true strategical position for their empire. In the days of Aurungzebe, Balkh was an integral portion of his dominions and Cabul was a province of which his heir-apparent was the governor.

We are asked why we should have one set of rules and principles in Europe where we are controlled by the power of other nations, and another in Asia where we are powerful. The answer is that we have already got all that was necessary to us in Europe that we could get. We have Gibraltar and other points properly belonging to other nations because we want them, and if there were others of vital necessity to us and to the maintenance of our empire we should do wisely and well to try and take them.

For our present relations with Afghanistan, let us turn to the account of them given two years ago by Sir John Strachey, for a short time officiating as Governor-General of India. This conspicuous member of the British Government, published at that time a

minute commenting upon the Viceroyalty of his immediate predecessor Lord Mayo. This paper is a frank exposition of the policy which we have for the last five years steadily pursued in Central Asian affairs, and bears on its face the self complacency of a writer who had the credit of having suggested and advised it.

It sets forth how 'Lord Mayo threw himself into international and political questions with a vigour, sagacity, and foresight which have left marked effects beyond the limits of India, and which have influenced the councils even of that great European Power which shares with us dominion in Asia.' The effects were marked indeed, and the influence on the councils of Russia were distinctly shown in—the annexation of Khiva! 'Peace and settled government have been unknown in any of the kingdoms bordering upon our Indian Empire for ages; this chronic state of turbulence both provokes and invites aggression. This state of things forced on the extension of the British Empire to the mountains beyond the Indus, and has extended *in spite of herself* the dominion of Russia in Asia.' Here we have Russia's own apology anticipated almost in her own words. We would ask if 'this state of things' has been altered in any way? 'In spite of herself.' But Russian progress has been openly pre-arranged, as we shall show, in every particular and as part of a programme avowed over and over again and

thoroughly appr .iated and understood by every power of Europe and Asia, except our own. If anarchy and turbulence on the borders are the true causes of the extension of Russia's frontier and ours, have those causes ceased in any way to operate? And what steps have been taken to control them? 'By endeavouring through frank and amiable discussion with the Russian Government to secure the adoption of a similar policy,' that of non-annexation, 'in the countries on their frontier in Asia, it was his' (Lord Mayo's) 'hope to remove the causes of disquietude as to the designs of England and Russia.' O most lame and impotent conclusion! The colloquy between the wolves was to reassure the sheep. The understanding between the polite policeman and the amiable burglar was to release the trader from all uneasiness! The unhappy Khivans were 'disquieted' enough to send a special envoy to us imploring intervention with Russia, but our 'frank and amiable discussion' could not permit of such an interruption, and Khiva was absorbed in due course. Of Afghanistan Sir John Strachey informed us:—'The Ameer of Cabul in 1869 had come to us hoping for a fixed annual subsidy, for assistance to be given, not when the British Government might think fit to grant it, but when he might think needful to solicit it, and 'for a treaty laying the British Government under obligations to support the Afghan

Government in any emergency. The hopes he was obliged to abandon.'

Of course he was. Of course the most favourable opportunity we could have had offered to us of fixing the wavering affection of Afghanistan, of 'grappling her to our soul with hooks of steel' and gold, was thrown away. Naturally the Ameer came to us, as Khiva had done, for aid and support against a common foe. He gave us credit for the common sense which must perceive the advantage which would accrue to us in establishing a unity of interests with Afghanistan and a claim on his obedience and fealty to us. In disappointing him of those hopes we deliberately rejected the certain opportunities of consolidating our influence in Central Asia, and one of the most advantageous offers ever made to us. Even if the Ameer did return to his dominions, as we are told, 'a contented man' (and those nearest his person never believed this), because we gave him 120,000*l.* and a battery of guns, few people will believe that we ingratiated ourselves with the Afghan nation by the gift. We behaved as a man would do who, on being appealed to by a friend for countenance and support to his credit, should offer to the suppliant a 10*l.* note and his good wishes. The Ameer pocketed the money and the good wishes, and proceeded of course straightway to look elsewhere for his surety, and he found it, equally of course 'in a direct correspondence

which has been renewed from time to time, and which has conveyed to the Ameer assurances of the neighbourly sentiments entertained towards Afghanistan by the Russian Government.'

The Ameer in fact asked for our hearty and cordial assistance when he should need it, and we replied in the terms of this remarkable minute of Sir John Strachey's, 'that the British Government will view with severe displeasure any attempts to disturb his position.' This reminds us of Lord Russell's assurance to Denmark before the Prussian invasion, that 'she should not stand alone.' Great nations may show displeasure, but they do not usually confine themselves to the utterance of sounding phrases of this sort. Lord Mayo, we are farther told, enjoined on the Ameer that 'the highest wisdom was to abstain from interfering in the affairs of his neighbours and to play his part in restoring peace to Central Asia.' The Ameer 'was not slow to accept' this advice, and we find him the very next year waging war in Chitral. Because masterly inactivity is the attitude we prefer, Afghanistan is also to sit with folded hands while the lawless tribes in her vicinity are raiding on her territory. 'The full exposition of the peaceful policy which Lord Mayo made, elicited from the Emperor of Russia himself that his Government entertained no intention of extending his dominions.'

Are Russian professions to be blindly accepted as truths in face of the facts, that from year to year her armies are carrying fire and sword into 'the wasted regions of Central Asia.'

If a landed proprietor meet a trespasser on his preserves with a gun in his hand, a retriever at his heels, and snares and traps of all descriptions in his pockets, if he sees moreover that the trespasser is laden with game, which he has already bagged, will that proprietor accept the poacher's assurances that he has no intention of shooting any more? Surely the force of confiding folly can no farther go. 'The irony of events' has been too strong for Sir John Strachey. But Afghanistan presents 'no danger to the British Power.' Not when in a state of vassalage to our rival? Can any statesman seriously advance such an argument? We have already indicated the danger from a purely military and strategical point of view. But there is another if possible still graver. If Afghanistan is to stand alone that state of vassalage is as certainly her doom as that which has befallen the Khanates. We alone could prevent such a consummation, and we have repeatedly declined to prevent it. When it is complete, with the obvious power which Russia would possess of fomenting intrigues and disturbances all along our borders without committing herself to any act of overt hostility, would come also the power at any fitting

juncture of opening the gates on the roads leading direct from Central Asia to India and of permitting hordes of Turcomans, Kazuks, Afghans, Afreedies, &c., all eager for plunder, athirst for blood, to pour in a vast tide of strife to overflow the broad rich lowlands of India till the days of Mahmoud and Timoor would seem to have come back again.[1]

They who argue against our interference with Afghanistan conceive our only danger to arise from the march of the Russian line to confront ours on the Indus. They call up an imaginary picture of a thin

[1] 'There have been—I know not if there are—politicians who, in considering the possible invasion of India by a Russian army, have advised us to fight upon the Indus. Their argument is simply this, that the farther Russia advances from her base the weaker she becomes, owing to extended communication, and the awakened hostility of the nations on whom she tramples in her progress; while, of course, the nearer we remain to our resources, to our depôts, our magazines, and especially to our sea base, the stronger is our military position; but this view of the question entirely leaves out of consideration the discouraging—nay, the disastrous—moral effect that would be produced in India by our remaining inactive, and apparently paralysed, until called on to stake our empire on a frontier battle, and it equally ignores the danger of our fair provinces being desolated under such circumstances by hordes of barbarians, who, in thirst of plunder, would accompany the European invaders—the descendants of those wild warriors who rode with Nadir Shah to Delhi. There is not, of course, at present—and probably there never will be—any question of such an extreme alternative, but, as a matter of argument, it seems like fatuity to pretend to set off the vital danger of defeat on our immediate frontier against the possible inconvenience of incurring the hostility of the mountain tribes by a forward movement.'—Sir Henry Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*, chap. vi.

and disheartened Russian column debouching from the defiles of the Khyber, harassed by foes on their flank and rear, to fall easy victims to a British force admirably posted to receive them. The picture which we would present is the occupation of Afghanistan by the Russians in precisely the same manner that Bokhara is now occupied—the extension of their lines of communication direct, and unbroken from Balkh to St. Petersburg, a line of railway from Moscow to Charjooee, strong Russian garrisons in Cabul, Candahar and Ghuznee, the advance of large regular armies by the Goleiree and Bolan passes, and then an intimation to the Afreedies, Swatties, &c., that if they care for a little plunder and diversion in the cutting of a few infidel throats, their time is come.

But putting aside imaginary pictures and confining ourselves to the dryer but safer regions of facts, we can discover no possible reason why Russian progress should stop at the Khanates any more than it should have stopped at Orenburgh. Where and when is the line to be drawn? Is there any evidence that the Russian position to be ultimately taken up has long been anticipated by her statesmen, and has been so far attained, and will in the future be still farther determined by long cherished and admirably arranged plans? There is overwhelming evidence of this. Important as the actual situation is between us, it

obviously becomes infinitely more remarkable if we perceive that it is due to certain defined means of progress marked out beforehand, adhered to for a century and a half without faltering, and not yet terminated.

And that is precisely what we are called upon to see. The whole course of Russian policy in Asia, as well as in Europe, is distinctly traceable to the genius of Peter the Great. Not only did this extraordinary man himself initiate the vast scheme of aggression ceaselessly pursued since his day, but he left a will the terms of which are familiar to the world, binding down his successors to certain specific and precise rules for their guidance and for the perpetuation of that policy. The sure means for this and the aggrandisement of the empire are detailed with an ability and frankness not often seen in State papers, and the rare fidelity with which its terms have been continuously obeyed is even more remarkable.

Beginning in the spirit of prophecy, this document declares that the testator found his kingdom a brook, that he left it a river, and that it should become a mighty sea destined to overflow Europe and Asia. With this object 'the Russian nation must be kept constantly on a war footing to preserve the army in a good condition, and to foster a warlike spirit. No opportunity must be lost in taking part in the affairs

of Europe, especially those of Germany. Poland is to be divided by keeping up constant jealousies and confusion there. Russian troops must be sent into that country and retained there on some pretext or another until the habit of occupation becomes fixed, and they can be kept there altogether. Should the neighbouring Powers offer any objection, appease them by allowing them a share. Foment quarrels between Denmark and Sweden. The consorts of Russian princes to be invariably chosen from German princesses to multiply alliances and to unite German interests with Russian. Keep up commercial relations with England, as she most needs Russian products and Russia gets her gold in exchange. The frontiers must be kept steadily extending northward along the Baltic and southward along the shores of the Black Sea. Progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. The Power that can once obtain possession of those places is the real ruler of the world. Provoke constant quarrels with Turkey, at another time with Persia. Establish wharfs and docks in the Euxine and obtain the mastery in that sea. Then hasten the downfall of Persia, re-establish the ancient commerce with the Levant through Syria, and force a way to the Indies which are the storehouses of the world.'

The above is a brief abstract of the text on which

Russian history is being written. It goes on to describe the plan for the ultimate subjection of France and Germany as ably and as concisely as that detailed above for the project of Eastern conquest. Nearly a hundred and fifty years have elapsed since that document was written, and its scheme as far as time has permitted has been carried out to the letter.

Twenty years ago, France and England combined to thwart the designs of Russia in a most determined attempt to carry out the portion of the programme regarding Turkey. During those years the military power of France has crumbled in the dust, and simultaneously with her humiliation, the treaty of 1856 was torn up, the 'wharfs and docks on the Euxine' were constructed. Who will save the Ottoman Empire when next the Autocrat declares the sick man must die? Russia displays her wishes with reference to the Porte distinctly enough. Not a week ago we are told 'it was understood that at the ambassadorial conferences at Constantinople, before the common appeal to the Porte of the signatory Powers of 1854, Russia demanded the formation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into an independent State. Austria replied that sooner than permit the realization of a scheme threatening the integrity of her own territory she would annex both. Germany then mediated. She saw the necessity of maintaining the integrity of Turkey, but thought

that satisfactory concessions should be made by the Porte to the insurgent provinces. On this basis the Powers addressed the Sultan.'

The pear was not yet ripe, and Russia can afford to wait.

The position is not now of course quite as Peter the Great left it. Indeed one of the surest testimonies of the authenticity of the document we have quoted is the ignorance it displays of the position which Great Britain was destined to occupy. The Czar could not foresee that we should have forestalled him in India. In 1725 our footing there was not much firmer and broader than it now is in China, and no one could have predicted the course by which we achieved the present limits of our empire. But it has so fallen out that we have thus anticipated Russia in a portion of her great design. Will she, therefore, relinquish it? Does our knowledge of that great Power, so far as it goes, serve to assure as that, being baulked of her obvious purpose, she will, for that reason, hold out the hand of friendship to the Power that disappoints her?

It would be in direct defiance of all history, of all facts, to imagine this for an instant. But, if we do not suppose this amicable arrangement, on what terms can we confront Russia in Asia, with every advantage on her side, every disadvantage on ours? By the necessity of our mutual position, by her own traditional

and avowed policy, by the truth that is deeper than philosophy, the war in the hearts of men, we shall be face to face with an enemy.

A certain class of writers on this subject is fond of assuring us that Russia imperatively requires peace and time to consolidate her already colossal empire; that she has not the money nor the material sufficient for present purposes of aggression. In reply we observe that this has been her reported condition ever since 1815. And yet, nevertheless, the process of assimilation of neighbouring territory has been steadily continuous and simultaneous with the consolidation of her domestic affairs. Even during the Crimean War, while engaged single-handed against the two leading Powers of Europe, she scarcely intermitted for an appreciable term her designs on Central Asia. Like a young giant, she continues her growth and matures her constitution together. Her resources in Turkestan receive accession of strength and vital stimulus with each step she takes. It was but in 1873 that she concluded a commercial treaty with Yakoob Khan; and to-day 'the Russian Government seems convinced that the Khokand rebellion, which extended to Russian Turkestan, was fomented by Yakoob Khan of Kashgar. An agent of his has just made his appearance at Odessa; but, as he must have left before recent revolutionary events, his arrival will hardly have power

to put off retributive measures.' In the words of the old fable, the lamb muddied the stream from which the wolf drank, and 'retributive measures' are at once adopted. Will not the same plea be put forward in dealing with the Ameer of Afghanistan?

The statistics of the Russian trade with the Khanates show a great increase since recourse has been had to arms. The trade in 1863 on the Orenburgh and Siberian line amounted to 14,665,652 roubles, in 1867 to 29,486,800 roubles. The war she has been, and is, waging, therefore, so far from crippling her resources, is extending them, and the projected advance on Kashgar will increase them still more. In fact Russia backs her mercantile enterprise with arms just as England used to do.

Sir John Strachey tells us 'it had taken many years to obliterate the memory of the disastrous policy of 1839–42, and to convince the Afghan nation that the British Power was not a neighbour whose interference or aggression was to be feared.' What have we gained by the fear being removed and transferred to our rival? Certainly neither prestige nor influence. A disaster, it is true, occurred in the shape of a reverse to our arms in Cabul; but that was a purely military disaster caused by military blundering and incompetency of the grossest kind, and it was afterwards redeemed by the exploits of Pollock and Nott. But

one reverse does not show a policy to be necessarily disastrous. Russia has been repulsed repeatedly in the Caucasus, in the Crimea, and in Turkestan, but we see in her no signs of an abandonment of policy or of a diminution in vigour.

The course taken by Great Britain in 1839 was of a piece with her traditions, and was of the same order as that which achieved our Indian Empire. Its abandonment is not, we may be well assured, set down to our amendment in morals, but simply to our growing weakness. The clue which we then lost in our relations with Central Asia has now been picked up by Russia. We shall not have to wait long before perceiving whither it will lead. We have ourselves aided to place a lever in Russia's hands more powerful than that dreamed of by Archimedes.

From Chitral to Lus Beyla the whole line of our frontier is bordered by countries whose inhabitants are robbers by profession; to whom the use of a knife at the throat of an infidel is a positive delight; to whom the wealth of India is a vision of all imaginable splendour; to whom its pillage would be a realisation of Paradise. Let it be but suggested to these men that to the gratification of their cupidity beyond their dreams, to the indulgence of their cruelty beyond the bounds of fanaticism, they will be encouraged and aided the (to them) greatest and wisest Power on earth,

and can any sane man doubt of the result on them and its significance to us?

But our optimists, our statesmen, chosen by, and from amongst, the wealthy, refined, and highly-cultivated children of luxury, who swarm in the island home, filled with wealth from the whole world, these not only ignore the temper of a wild border people, they never conceive an idea of it. That countless tribes of men should exist to whom the grating of steel on human flesh and bone is the keenest known pleasure, to be indefatigably sought, and gained by any amount of toil, endurance, and suffering, is a fact too shocking to be contemplated. They, whose cheek the blast of war and violence has never visited roughly, dream of policy, and progress, and government, as of things apart from turmoil, bloodshed, ferocity, and treachery, which really sway the destinies of nations and of men. But the waking, when friends have failed to arouse, and foes effect it by force, will be late and pitiful to see. The position now arrived at is precisely that against the danger of which all the statesmen of a bygone day practically acquainted with Central Asian politics have left us their warning.

Sir John Macdonald in 1830 wrote: 'We have little to dread from the machinations of Russia until such time as the dissolution of the existing government of Persia by the death of the present king may enable

17721

her to acquire a paramount influence in the councils of that empire; when, by skilfully applying its resources to the promotion of her own needs, Russia might imperceptibly approach us without any hostile warning.'

This is precisely what Russia has done, and is doing. Sir John Macniell writes: 'Herat in the possession of Russia she becomes mistress of the destinies of Asia. Great Britain will be forced back upon the Indus; Khiva and Bokhara must submit if they are attacked; Persia and Afghanistan are thus at her disposal.' Khiva and Bokhara have submitted, and the subjugation of Turkestan and the advance on Merv place Herat in extreme jeopardy. Abbott writes in 1839 while at Khiva: 'How nearly, in 1827, Persia had been swallowed up by Russia is well known. With Persia, the whole of Turkestan, Afghanistan, and Beloochistan must lapse to Russia; so that the Indus alone would separate Russia from India, and we should need an army of 60,000 men to guard our north-west frontier. These are no visionary alarms. The fall of Turkestan into the hands of Russia inevitably follows that of Persia, and *vice versâ*. The supreme influence in Central Asia given to the European Power who should possess either, would make the opposition of any other State ridiculous. A reference to the map is often followed by such remarks as these: "There is a wide

space between the Russian frontier and the Persian Gulf. It will be time to think of these things when the danger is more imminent." Let him who makes this reflection be assured, as a little examination will assure him, that it is but a single step from Russia to the Persian Gulf; a step that could be made in a few months; that it will be made the instant we withdraw our active influence, and that, being made, it will be irretrievable; that the instant it shall be effected our Indian possessions must become a dead and strangling burden, I think we have seen.'

This was written thirty-six years ago; the position that Russia is here supposed to occupy has been actually reached. We have withdrawn our influence. We have been appealed to in turn by the Ameer of Afghanistan, by the Ataligh Ghazee (Yakoob Khan), by the Ameer of Khokand, and by the Ameer of Khiva. And to the solicitations of all we have always reiterated the one answer—England cannot interfere. Persia is little more than a dependency on Russia. Turkestan is her own. Afghanistan and Beloochistan alone remain. And two years ago the Ameer of the former State signified his desire to submit in all things to the Czar. Thrown over by us, he could do no less.

And yet we are told the frontiers of nations are now no longer subject to the law of change! The action is going on in every direction. Russia is ad-

vancing in Eastern Turkestan and towards China as rapidly as in Western Turkestan and Persia—Kashgar and Yarkund being already definite objects of her attack.

Foreign public opinion takes the common-sense view of our position. The 'Allgemeine Zeitung,' in 1873, had an article in which it was stated that 'the indifference which England displayed with regard to the ruler of Eastern Turkestan' (Yakoob Khan) 'was a great mistake; and if the causes of this indifference were puzzling enough to the distant spectators, they must have been still more so to the Ataligh Ghazee, who cannot but have regarded the conduct of England as indicative of weakness and want of courage.' Exactly. Since Abbott wrote we have advanced our frontier beyond the Indus, but only to take up, by halting short of our proper mark, a position strategically false. Retrogression on our part would be a practical abandonment of empire. Nothing could save us from the consequences of any backward step. Instant insurrection within our own borders, and instant war along the whole frontier beyond them, would ensue with all the force, mischief, and suddenness of an explosion. Reviled by the people whom we should leave exposed and defenceless, with the shame of beaten aggressors, our first step of retreat would be the signal for unspeakable disaster and bloodshed, and from that hour our

doom would be sealed. To stay where we are is simply to maintain deliberately a bad and false military position.

So that, whether we turn to the contemplation of the political aspect, or regard our present frontier from a purely strategical point of view, there is little to cheer us.

We have observed that the whole of the issues of the frontier are in the hands of our enemies; that is to say, they possess the means of passing to any point of our border at their pleasure. While we confront only the border tribes by themselves, this defiance of a primary military law may work us no harm; but, inspired and instigated by Russia, they would not be long in comprehending our disadvantage. We repeat that the difficulty of defending the plains at the base of a long line of mountains is sufficiently notorious, the assailants holding the higher ground, and possessing the power of descending, by such of the passes as they might select, absolutely in the rear of our line of defence at other points, so that to maintain it with any confidence would be almost impossible. It would therefore become imperative, the moment hostilities broke out, to hold all the principal passes by means of very strong advanced guards, at the same time keeping a large army disposable at points of reserve in rear. When such a line as that extending from Gilghit to

Scinde (for we are assuming that our dependant of Cashmere places himself unreservedly in our hands) is held by us, our assailants obviously have it in their power to keep us watching and guarding many such points (for if they forced a passage anywhere the whole system of defence would be broken up); the magnitude of the army required to perform adequately the task may be easily calculated, and we have now certainly nothing approaching the necessary numerical strength.

For we have so repressed, especially since the Mutiny, the military instincts and habits of the people over whom we rule, that India herself, far more defenceless and far weaker, both in spirit and resources, than she has ever been, is at this moment dependent only on British bayonets for safety. Of these we have barely sufficient to maintain ourselves in tranquillity within our own boundaries. For the purpose of defence beyond them—and our true line of defence lies on the Russian flank in Persia—we have not a spare regiment, nor a company, nor a gun.

Yet we are to allow our enemies to choose our fairest provinces to make their war in. If we are so powerless that we are unable to meet their advance before they touch British ground, then have we virtually given up the contest.

Nor is it in the north-west alone that sources of

danger exist which render our position essentially unsafe. We are accustomed to consider Cashmere an absolute dependency upon us. But if ever Russian or Afghan intrigue should disturb in the slightest degree our relations with that country, it scarcely requires the eye of either statesman or soldier to perceive the impending mischief. Even if we could occupy it without a blow, where are the troops which we could spare for the purpose? Again, and still farther to the eastward, there are many anxieties connected with the kingdom of Nepal. On one man's life there hang the issues of peace and war.

The resources we possess to meet the very numerous and obvious dangers by which we are surrounded must be considered in a separate chapter. But if, in the face of the various circumstances detailed, due not to chance, nor to any exceptional causes, but to the sure working of great and fundamental laws, the tendencies of which have been accurately divined, studied, and acted on by a Power inimical to our own, we are still determined to repose in 'masterly inactivity' in a fool's paradise painted for us by purblind leaders and astute foes, then we can only say of ourselves, as was said of old—

Whom the gods would destroy, they first madden.[1]

[1] In his work already alluded to, Sir Henry Rawlinson's concluding words are: 'I counsel nothing rash or premature. If Russia remained

encamped on the Caspian, we should not of course leave the valley of the Indus. So long as she held aloof from Merv, we should hold aloof from Herat; but if she deliberately threw down the gauntlet she must expect it to be taken up.' We can only suppose that Sir Henry Rawlinson does not as yet consider that the gauntlet has been thrown down. Yet hardly a day passes without bringing us intelligence of some move on the part of Russia which distinctly displays her intention *not* to remain encamped on the Caspian. Thus in the morning papers of this day (Nov. 20, 1875) we read: 'By an order of the Grand Duke Michael, the Krasnovodsk corps is about to be strengthened by four infantry battalions. This new expedition will start towards the end of March or in the beginning of April, with instructions to establish three forts on the Russo-Persian frontier.' This is but one of numerous paragraphs which constantly meet our eyes, and which receive confirmation from time to time by a brief announcement in the Russian 'Gazette' of the annexation of additional portions of territory to Russian dominions, such as that relating to the recent acquisitions in Khokand. In regard to the occupation of Herat in 1856 by Persian troops, and our declaration of war for the purpose of compelling their withdrawal, Sir Henry Rawlinson remarks: 'If, then, such measures were justifiable in order to prevent the Western Afghan capital from falling into the hands of Persia, who was only to be feared as *the minion or precursor of Russia*, much more must they be required when the danger comes directly from Russia herself.' In the previous page the writer justly remarks: 'Russia by advancing on Merv evidently means mischief. She would never embark on an enterprise of so perilous a nature for mere purposes of trade or police. Political objects of high import could alone justify the movement. These objects necessarily point to Herat, which would lie at the mercy of a European Power holding Merv, and from whence India could be seriously threatened.' Following the line of argument we have already adduced, Sir Henry Rawlinson sums up his opinion concerning the importance of Herat in the words, 'Russia in possession of Herat would have a grip on the throat of India.' He finally gives it as his advice as 'the facility of taking Herat by a *coup-de-main* from Merv is so patent, while the consequences of that movement to British India might be so fatal, that it seems a fair matter for consideration whether the Russian occupation of the one city should not be immediately followed by the British occupation of the other.' Of the soundness of this conclusion, no competent mind will doubt. The only objection to be taken to the course suggested is its present absolute

impracticability. We *cannot* with our armies in their present condition send a force of 10,000 men into Afghanistan and keep it supplied there. But the contingency against which Sir Henry Rawlinson would thus guard is evidently regarded by him as one certain to arrive. He writes: 'The present expedition against the Turkomans is merely one of a series of movements that will almost infallibly lead the Russians to Merv.' So that it would seem that we have little time to lose in preparation for our own defensive move in advancing on Herat. Even if we could now, by the most vigorous efforts, place our forces on a footing which would render such advance possible, the policy we have pursued in Afghanistan since 1869 has been attended with a result which is best given in Sir Henry Rawlinson's own words:—

'It may be assumed, then, that the Amir of Cabul is for the time being, displeased with his English allies, and it is further evident that an estrangement of this nature may lead to serious consequences. . . It was the spectacle of Russian activity, as contrasted with English inertness, which in the first place probably arrested his attention, and disturbed his judgment. He could not understand why Russia should advance year by year, from conquest to conquest, with amazing success, while England remained inactive within her ancient limits, except on the supposition that we were the weaker Power of the two . . . . He certainly believed Lord Mayo to have promised unlimited support, and he thought that the present time, when we were supposed to be thoroughly alarmed at Russia's approach through the Turkoman country, was favourable for urging his pretension. When he found accordingly that he had misunderstood the Viceroy's language . . . he was disappointed and irritated.' We have not space to quote all that the writer advances on the subject of the alienation of the good feeling which it should have been our main object to cultivate with the Amir. But enough is shown to demonstrate the fact to which we have already drawn attention, viz. the loss of a great opportunity offered to us at the time of the Umballah conference, to establish an alliance with Afghanistan which would have been of the most essential value to our Empire. The opportunity is gone, and we only differ from Sir Henry Rawlinson in believing that the 'estrangement' is other than temporary. We need hardly say that the occupation by a British force of Herat, without the cordial assistance and co-operation of the Amir of Cabul, is an enterprise that, even after a complete re-organisation of our armies on a war footing, would test our resources to the uttermost.

CHAPTER V.

THE WEAKNESS WITHIN.

THERE is an affectation amongst a certain class that believes in peace parties, that the loss of our colonies and great dependencies, acquired with a vast expenditure of life and treasure, and which have conferred on Great Britain the wealth, rank, and power she enjoys, would be the cause of no serious nor lasting injury to the nation. This has been said with regard to the loss of Canada, and it has been said also of the loss of India. The people who say it are not generally accustomed to carry argument to a logical conclusion; yet it is not very difficult to comprehend the consequences which insult and spoliation unchecked might bring upon their victim, nor hard to imagine that, when a man's limbs are lopped off, the subsequent process of cutting his throat or bleeding him to death becomes greatly simplified.

Or, to drop metaphor, it is intelligible that should next year's national income fall short of this year's by

twenty millions sterling, should many thousands of English families be suddenly reduced from affluence to destitution, the mischief accruing to the nation would be considerable. Yet these are the least and immediate evils which would ensue were India severed from England. We can, without having recourse to divination or requiring prophetic inspiration, conceive the troubles which would fall upon us—the disorganisation of trade, the fall of all public securities, the agitation of popular feeling, and the probable revolutionary outbreak which would follow an intimation that we had cast off our Indian empire, which would be ceded to Russia. Or, if we can imagine this, we can equally imagine the not very dissimilar consequences which would follow the news that our army had been utterly defeated by Russian troops, that the native portion of it had deserted, and that our forts and arsenals had fallen into the hands of our rival. But this is what is implied in the loss of India which is so lightly spoken of. It is, astounding as the statement may seem in its naked simplicity, an event which we are preparing for in the policy of 'masterly inactivity' now in vogue.

It is not for want of means, nor the energy to employ them, that we rest supine. It is from carelessness, and the want of common foresight and sagacity in those at home who should direct public opinion, that we are drifting into an untenable position, and it

is to be feared that in India the motive for inaction is more unworthy, viz. an unwillingness to risk personal advantages in avowing unpopular truths. We may see this more clearly as we proceed. It is scarcely conceivable that the position which will become apparent after investigation is wholly unappreciated by all whose special business is to be cognisant of the truth.

For our resources, we have, first, wealth. This we have seen to be, inasmuch as it is a temptation to cupidity, a danger if not adequately guarded, but if properly employed it is the foundation of defence. A nation that cannot or will not guard its wealth, deserves to lose it; that it will lose it has been very plainly exemplified to us in the instance of our neighbour, France, from whom we learn that the magnitude of the losses incurred in defeat is immeasurably greater than any cost of defence. Besides money we have men, who make the best soldiers in the world. We could no doubt, if we would, make the military service attractive; we have done so in some circumstances before, and never were they so urgent as now. Yet, though we have the money and the men, we do not bring them together to utilise both. The Crown cannot and the Nation will not increase the pay of the soldier.[1] We have arms also, the best in the world, and with them we have the skill, and the material, and the means for producing

[1] See p. 121.

them to the most ample extent. Our military organisation in respect of system of drill, education, and qualification of officers and men for war, and their aptitude for their profession, is, notwithstanding some defects, and a great deal more adverse and unjust criticism, certainly equal if not superior to that of any other Power on earth. Even its greatest enemies would probably admit that, man for man, an English army would be more than a match under equal conditions for any other army in the world. But it is absolutely certain that, unless great changes are made in our political disposition, we shall never meet our enemies under anything approaching equal conditions.

Our whole military establishment both at home and abroad is ridiculously small in proportion either to our own pretensions as a Power, our possessions, or to the forces maintained by the States which must sooner or later be opposed to us. It is dangerously small. Even of the force that does exist the larger portion of it is placed so as to be really unavailable for the emergencies which are the features of modern war. One-third of it—in India—is charged with a task to which in profound peace it is barely equal—the holding of a great conquered dependency by force of arms—and all that portion of it is compromised in point of strategical position. It is holding an outpost with a long and devious, if not insecure, line of communication with its

base, having a powerful enemy menacing it in its weakest points.

There are but two measures which can adequately remedy these examples of perilous weakness. One is to raise and maintain an army whose permanent home will be in India; to do this well it should be localised. A local British force enlisted for service exclusively in that country would be popular with the classes which furnish our best recruits, and it could be raised to the necessary strength without the objections always made to an increase of the Imperial troops for reasons to be presently shown. The other is to take possession of a line of communication with India the shortest and most easily defensible. To render our hold of that country secure, both these measures should be adopted; to render it tenable, one or the other must be taken.

A local British force for India is no new thing. The service of the old East India Company was always attractive to the British soldier. No difficulty was ever experienced in obtaining recruits; and desertion was very rare, quite incomparably so with desertion as now known, and for sufficient reason:[1] the Company's soldier was better paid, better fed, and better treated than his comrade of the Line; he occupied a social status in India which rather raised than depressed him

[1] *Vide* Captain Hime's Prize Essay on 'Universal Conscription.' In 1872 5,861 men deserted from the Army. In 1873 5,702 deserted.

from the class he came from. A more contented, a better behaved, and a more efficient body of soldiery than the Company's British troops never existed in any country or service. How they fought in our old days of Indian successes is told in many a page of Indian story. The scarlet uniform there was a garb of pride and honour, its wearer an object of deference, not a dress which now in England excludes the man from the company of his equals in public places, acts as a bar to social recognition, and is regarded as a sign of the lowest depths of servitude. In recruiting for the Indian Army there were sure prospects held out to ambition. The career of a steady, sober soldier, with any degree of education, always led to a rise, not to a degradation, in life; the numerous instances of men from the ranks who had 'made their fortunes,' were made the subject of many a narrative round the Indian camp fire; and aspirations which not unfrequently fulfilled themselves in the future, brightened in the present the restraints and discomforts of the soldier's life. There are many reasons why the re-establishment of a local army should be undertaken. There is at present no statutory restraint on the Crown, i.e. the Ministry, from withdrawing any portion, or the whole, of the Imperial troops from India at any time. Popular excitement, or one of those panics which occasionally seize the public mind, might insist on the recal of a

part of the army to defend some point in Europe to which the course of war might be directed; and it cannot be too strongly urged and insisted on that our whole present force is barely equal to its work in India now to maintain even internal order, so that the withdrawal of troops to any appreciable extent would infallibly invoke disaster. Again, we have now an immense expenditure annually necessary for the reliefs according to the present system. Not only have we to relieve whole batteries and regiments periodically, but the shortness of the period of enlistment renders it incumbent on the Government to provide constantly for the passage of men whose time is expired and who claim their discharge. To keep the force up to its strength a corresponding number of men is drafted from England to replace those returning from India, and a constant coming and going of men in the prime of life is thus perpetuated, and great expense and waste of material incurred. The consideration of this subject brings us face to face with the difficulties which have arisen on the abolition of the East India Company. We shall not here discuss the expediency or propriety of that measure in the abstract, but we are bound to notice certain consequences which have followed the adoption of a very questionable act of policy.

One of the means by which the Company created and preserved for a century and a half a great empire

was the formation of two classes of servants, every member of both being brought up from boyhood to regard India as the country of his adoption. Raised for a special career, soldiers and civilians alike devoted their ambition and their energies to acquire local reputation with local experience. India was then a country to be studied by those who had elected to pass their lives in it. Its people, its provinces, its resources were all subjects of an interest not divided with trivialities of London gossip, nor forgotten in calculations of the years and months which must elapse before it could be abandoned.

There lay the secret of success. A great change has passed over the country since the storm that swept it in 1857. The attachments which before existed between England and India, by many rooted ties, not only of interest but of knowledge, the sympathy of intimate acquaintance, the long local connection, and anticipation of future prospect—all, in short, which bound the Indian services to their adopted home—have ceased to exist. Few men serve now but whose heartiest anticipations are for the close of their service; most of the older men are wearied, of the younger listless. The definite and assured career is no longer visible; there is little interest in the present, little confidence in the future. Bent only on the present acquisition of gain, from the sources which

now seem precarious, men perform their allotted duties perfunctorily with their eyes and attention turned ever from India grown disregarded, to England brought nearer.

If the evil be great now, it will be yet greater in the future ; for our youths, the officers and the statesmen of the coming day, enter the services once so attractive with sneers and railing on their lips and hate in their hearts. Between the native army and its English officers, mutual regard has become little more than a tradition; the pride in the service formerly so conspicuous in both sepoy and officer has dwindled to the verge of extinction.

The young subalterns of British regiments, from among whom are drawn the officers of the present native army, enter the Indian Staff Corps in most instances with unconcealed regret, in many with avowed aversion. We only glance here at this portion of the mischief working in our system, fraught with peril as it is. The subject of the great Mutiny, and destruction of the main body of the Company's army, and the organisation of that which has taken its place, must be considered in the next chapter by itself. But this is certain, that with the Company, and its army and Civil Service, have disappeared all our ties with India, save that held by the grip of conquest. We may hold that still acting under the ordinary rules of war. But

to do so we must observe those rules. With an *efficient* and a *sufficient* force, and with a line of communication as good as those we have ceded to our rival, with reserves placed on this line, with a strong influence born of fear at the courts of the kingdoms which surround it, India might still be held as a conquered country, and we could disregard our relations with it except in that shape and from that point of view.

But we have neither a sufficient force nor a protected communication. If peace could last for ever in Europe this state of affairs might last too. As it is, if we cannot see, and seeing provide against, the certain results which are being displayed to us day by day, at no distant period we shall see the handwriting gleaming from the wall as we sit at the banquet; gleaming as it did of old in the palace of Belshazzar, and we shall need no prophet then to read its meaning.

The danger which threatens us is neither temporary nor fortuitous. It has its rise in the inherent discrepancy between a theory and circumstances which have outgrown it; between the theory of the national constitution of Great Britain, and the actual fact of her holding as a military possession a foreign Empire.

It is this which is practically forbidding us, hindering us—after conquest—from taking the natural, the only effectual, steps for maintaining it. To display

this discrepancy we will rapidly review the principal points of contrast between the theory and practice. The spirit of the Constitution is wholly inimical to the existence of a standing army. Confident in strength and valour to defend their own land, the English have been ever jealous of their personal liberty, and, relying on their constitutional army of defence, the militia, they have never tolerated the maintenance by the Crown of a force which might be used for oppression. This principle is perfectly intelligible, and well adapted to Great Britain, a small island. But it is absurd to apply it to the case of an immense conquered territory held by force of arms; and for India a large standing army is as indispensable as it is to France or Germany. The organisation of the army itself, adapted originally for one purpose, has been strained to another.[1] Thus it was formerly the object of the nation to have appointed to commissions in the army noblemen and gentlemen of position and wealth, not dependent on their profession, so that they might not be pecuniarily interested in the maintenance of the force when the occasion for it had passed away. Their pay was considered (and is so, indeed, to this day) an *honorarium*. No suit can be entertained in the Courts to enforce payment from the Crown for military services of individuals. They served, according to the theory, for

[1] *Vide* 'Military Forces of the Crown,' by Mr. Clode.

honour and patriotism alone, the professed object being the safety of the State. In India, on the contrary, the army was a purely professional body, its object conquest, its means dependent on acquisition, its officers, without private fortune, were paid by the Company under a fixed contract. The Indian army was, in short, a mercenary army—not using that word in any invidious sense; it served for pay, and it conquered that its employers might be enabled to pay it. The 'Amalgamation' then, which took place after the Mutiny of 1857, was a mere forcible combination of utterly incongruous materials. The result has been, that the actual administration of the army in India is a continual infraction of the principles of the British Constitution. There is thus a perpetual antagonism between the local needs and the Imperial machinery for supplying them. It is the effort to reconcile the irreconcilable which is doing incalculable mischief. The payment of the army under the Crown could only be made from funds granted by the nation. The Sovereign is not permitted by the Constitution to increase at will the pay of any of her soldiers, for it is held to be contrary to the law to exercise a power which might be used to alienate the attachment of the soldiery to the Parliament. The jealousy of the country on this point is so great that, as related by Mr. Clode, on the Army of Occupation being left in Paris in 1815, its

payment from funds derived from France was objected to, for it was said that nothing could be more dangerous to liberty than the existence of a force under the command of the Crown which should be dependent on foreign contributions for support. Even private contributions from subjects in England cannot be accepted, payment of the army depending wholly on the funds voted by Parliament.

Now the whole Indian army, British and native, was paid under conditions exactly the reverse of the above. The local government paid these armies, raised to such extent as seemed needful, from local funds. On one occasion the officer in chief command of the army (Sir Charles Napier), of his own motion and authority, raised the pay of a portion of it. This act, though of immediately beneficial effect, was in direct violation of all English Constitutional ideas, and was strongly censured by the Governor-General. Nevertheless, having regard only to the local circumstances, Sir Charles Napier was perfectly right and justified in what he did. This instance alone suggests the divergence from theory which circumstances in practice often enforce. Again, in civil affairs, to govern a vast continental empire, habituated under the influence of natural laws to pure despotism, on a system of insular construction, based on feelings, manners, modes of thought, habits, morals, and religious ideas utterly

dissimilar, is certain to lead to complications more or less mischievous, as they are determined more or less by theory against expediency. The machinery is inappropriate to its work; the point of rupture will always be the point of strongest strain, and that is where physical force, the ultimate appeal to which all Governments are liable, comes into play. A conflict is perpetually impending between the course dictated by any local necessity and that which will commend itself to English public opinion trained under totally different auspices. The Government of India is often forced into despotic measures.[1]

Its servants are yet more often forced into arbitrary acts, the only defence for which is their necessity. On an emergency, the Englishman in India is often called upon to decide whether he shall act as in his judgment he deems the occasion to demand, or take a course which he knows will commend itself, though erroneous, to English public opinion at home.

It is well for our empire that he is generally fear-

[1] *Vide* 'Government Resolutions,' July, 1875. Prohibiting any of its servants from having any connection with the public Press, either as mere investors of money, as proprietors, or as contributors to newspapers or periodicals. As nearly all the educated or well-informed Europeans in the country are Government servants in one capacity or another, this resolution is a complete gag to the Press, and all opinions expressed in the newspapers will be either worthless or dictated by the Government itself. *Vide* also the new Tariff Act, a mere expression of the Viceroy's will.

less enough to act on his judgment; but it is too often the case that, having ensured public safety on his own responsibility, he is made a scapegoat and victim for having done so in an unconstitutional manner.[1]

The totally inadequate strength of the force to which the safety of the Indian empire is confided is due mainly to the discrepancy we have pointed out. Because the idea of a standing army is abhorrent to the Englishman—the abhorrence arising from a dread of peril to his liberty—the raising of troops anywhere and under any circumstances has come to be a measure to be avoided if possible. The idea, become almost instinctive, pervades the mind when the causes which gave it birth are absent, and the consequence is a prevailing and most dangerous paucity of means to hold a position which we have usurped but cannot now forfeit. Jealousy for our own liberty has involved a jealousy for the liberty of others which is incompatible with our own rule, or has simulated it with the same effect. Parodoxical as it may seem, this fact will make itself sufficiently obvious when any danger from without presses. In proof of it we need only draw a com-

[1] The case of Messrs. Cowan and Forsyth in the Kooka emeute at Umritsur in 1872 is one in point. Influential friends saved the latter, but the former officer was dismissed the service. Governor Eyre's case in the West Indies is another instance.

parison between the numbers of our continental army in India, and those of any other continental army. Prussia with a population of 32 millions put into the field a million and a half of soldiers during the French War. France with a population of 37 millions had nearly a million, though they were not kept ready. India with a population of 200 millions has an army of 70,000 Europeans and 180,000 natives. Neither Germany nor France labour under greater disadvantages of frontier than we do, nor so great as those under which we shall labour when Russia has taken up her avowed line. Why, then, should we consider ourselves exempt from the laws which apply to Germany and France, except under the influence of our insular prejudice? We are deliberately preparing for defeat. We have taken up a position from which we cannot recede with either honour or safety, and we have declared our intention of holding it with means so slender and ill-adapted for it, that all the skill of our officers, all the perfection of our weapons, and all the unquestioned gallantry and courage of our troops will but ensure destruction. When failure comes, as it must come, every reason for it will be adduced but the right one. The generals will be pronounced incompetent, the staff worthless, the officers ignorant of their profession, and the soldiers undisciplined and untaught.

Scapegoats in profusion will be offered up to the fury of the British public, as merciless to failure as it is obdurate to warning. But the fault and the blunder will be where it is now—in the ignorance which is at once officious and obstructive, in the policy which is either indolent or interested.

CHAPTER VI.

AUXILIARY DEFENCE.

THE abolition of the East India Company and the transfer of its territories and armies to the Crown is generally justified by the plea that the Company had forfeited possessions it had shown itself unable to hold. Its maladministration had brought its own punishment. The mutiny of its army necessitated its extinction and a remodelling of the entire fabric.

This is, in brief, the argument which was brought forward and accepted as the basis on which the transfer was made. How far it is true we propose to examine in the history of its army, and the causes which led to the catastrophe of 1857.

It is instructive to observe that in nearly all cases where a nation extends its sway by permanent conquest of foreign countries, one of the chief means of spreading its power and consolidating its empire is the employment of the conquered people in forging their own fetters, the enrolment of the vanquished under the

standards of the victors, the appliance of the warlike energies of the conquered to the purpose of the conquerors. This would seem to be an anomaly in theory: but history shows it to be a general law, true of Rome and her legions, true of Russia, of France in Algeria, and especially of Great Britain in India.

For this purpose it is not necessary that there should be any gradual intermixture or alliance of the superior with the inferior nations, any blending of common interests, any fusion into an homogeneous body; the races thus bound together by a paramount Power for military purposes in the cause of their own subjugation, are often, and remain, opposed to one another as well as to their rulers in all the conditions that draw men into the aggregates we call States. Thus in character as in habits, in customs as in thought, in ethics as in creeds, the numerous Asiatic nations in the ranks of our native armies are each to each in antagonism only equalled by that to ourselves. What is the tie, then? What are the forces which can bind together these heterogeneous, these hostile elements into a corporate power which resembles nothing so much as those products of chemistry which in the guise of limpid fluid or fine powder await but a spark or a touch to develope into destructive agencies of incalculable force?

The answer is a simple one. The tie is that of

self-interest, the forces those that underlie the motives of all human masses—cupidity and fear.

In all States and communities a military element exists varying in quantity from the maximum, wherein the whole nation is an army, as at one period of their existence was the condition of the Hebrew, Greek, and Róman communities, to the minimum, as in the examples of modern Greece and Bengal proper where a few banditti alone represent the combative classes. The profession of arms legalised under State employ has in all ages attracted the youth and enterprise of every nation in which civilisation has advanced beyond the stage when each individual earns his daily bread by daily labour. When any such State is invaded and conquered, it is this class, the soldiery, which most directly suffers, for the Government which employed it has perished, and the revenue that supported it has been diverted. The husbandman may still labour at his plough, the artisan still work at his handicraft, though his country be under foreign dominion; but the soldier knowing nothing beyond his trade of arms, and finding no other means of subsistence open to him, is generally compelled to seek a refuge from want in the only direction open to him, and, if opportunity offer, is glad to accept service with those who need him and will support him in his only career.

The conquerors, on the other hand, are often glad to

utilise the weapon thus offered to their hands. Too few in numbers, or perhaps unsuited by climatic reasons for colonisation or to carry on by themselves the whole of the arduous duties arising from the armed occupation of a country, they are ready to make their service attractive to a class whose numbers supplement their own advantageously, whether to assist in keeping internal order, or to repress hostility from without.

Thus the contract is made. But manifestly, like all such contracts, it will last only so long as the conditions which made it acceptable to both parties to it remain unaltered, and its terms are fulfilled by both. Their relations are as between master and servant. These will be speedily broken if we suppose, for instance, the first unable to pay the stipulated wages, or if the last were offered more favourable terms elsewhere. Especially they will be broken if the servant has any good cause to suppose that by an effort of his own he can reverse the relative position, and sit in his master's place. The tie of self-interest would then be broken; the forces which held together the hostile elements would cease to act, and the explosion would ensue. To use the word loyalty to express the obligation of the servant to the master under the circumstances reviewed in the same sense as we imply in speaking of our duty to our own country and Sovereign, is to use a misnomer and to misapprehend the position.

These arguments may seem too trite and obvious to need insistence; but as it is on the simplest elements that the foundation of all matter rests, so on these truisms depends the accurate comprehension of our real status and true policy in India, and a contemplation of them confronts us with the circumstances which attended the Mutiny of 1857. These are of the most vital importance to the subject we now pursue, for from that event we date the birth of a new native army differing in many essential respects from the old one.

Between the old and the new a comparison should be fairly drawn. Whatever the faults and shortcomings of the former may have been, this should at least be remembered of it, that it flourished for more than a hundred years, and during the whole of that period it fulfilled the terms of its contract well; its career was one of almost uninterrupted conquest. Fostered by conflict and inured to war, it grew from being a mere band of armed retainers in the service of a trading company to be one of the finest and best appointed armies of its age. It fell by its very magnitude and excellence.

In its first rudimentary stage, the mercenary contingent which followed admiringly the path of conquest initiated by the extraordinary daring and enterprise of the Englishmen whose aggressive and acquisitive spirit founded an empire where they sought only for wealth,

was led and commanded by officers from its own ranks, and clothed and armed after its native fashion. The first example of training native soldiers in the European discipline and setting them under European commanders was given by the French, who raised and equipped five companies of sepoys at Pondicherry in 1746. But it was not long before the hint was taken and the example followed; for in 1753[1] we find a force of 200 sepoys in the British service under the command of Ensign Smith, with 40 European soldiers and two guns, supplementing a large native army from Arcot, allied to us and opposed to the French, bearing the brunt of an action in the field. The change in the system then inaugurated, of placing the native contingent under European in lieu of native leadership, was one of most marked significance. It was that change which gave stability to our dominion, and which proved in the hour of trial our surest stay; for the European officers of the native army have been ever as mortar to the edifice, or as nerves to the vital frame. With them were strength, cohesion, and adaptability; without them came disintegration and paralysis. As this truth became established by experience and its importance thoroughly understood, so by degrees the number of European officers to serve with the native army was augmented from time to time to keep pace

[1] Orme's 'History of Indostan.'

with public opinion and the necessities of the day. So efficient did the army become by this means and by the unremitting labour and attention bestowed upon it, that at length, both in drill and discipline, it became second only to the British army itself, far superior to the troops of any Asiatic Power beyond our frontier, and equal to the meeting in line and with the bayonet the troops of the only European Power, France, which we have ever confronted as a foe in India. Its value ascertained, it was made available to the utmost. Not merely confined to the limits of India, it bore arms to distant countries in the name and in the cause of England, of whose military resources it became an integral and important part. Java, Egypt, Afghanistan, and Burmah, attest the share taken by the native army in spreading British power and prestige abroad.

Its small proportional cost compared with that of British troops was a great recommendation to its extended employment; and it is to this, one of its merits, that may be traced the commencement of the political blundering which led to its ultimate ruin. For to this principally, aided by an unworthy jealousy on the part of the Imperial Government in England of the growth and increasing power of the Company, it was due, that from a subordinate position (*its proper position*), from being merely a useful accessory, an adjunct to the main support of our dominion in the East, the native army

swelled to a magnitude, and was invested with an importance, out of all proportion to its original design.

In truth, it dwarfed and overshadowed that which it was intended only to supplement and to assist. As province after province was gradually absorbed into our territory, so the native army was augmented by regiments and tens of regiments, while the English army remained at best stationary, or was diminished to defray the expense of its rival's increase.

This did not take place without remark and remonstrance from many statesmen. Ten years before the crash came a far seeing Governor-General remarked at a great review, as battery after battery of native artillery passed him, 'I should like to see some more white faces behind those guns.' Malcolm, Henry Lawrence, Sleeman, and others pointed out the mischief which was surely growing. But by most the danger was ignored or considered too remote to need precaution. Unfortunately it does not follow that because a fallacy is popular or even universal it ceases to be a fallacy. But it is often irresistible, and the mistakes of nations are as easily made as the blunders of individuals, only more extensively mischievous.

And thus it came about in course of time that the native army grew, until to its charge were committed nearly all the forts, the treasuries, the arsenals, the

ordnance, the cities and the points of strategical value throughout the empire except in one—its remotest province.

The following is a brief statement of the number and distribution of the British and native troops in the Bengal presidency in the beginning of May 1857:—

DISPOSITION OF BENGAL ARMY. 1857.

EUROPEAN			NATIVE		
Infantry	Artillery	Cavalry	Infantry	Artillery	Cavalry
FORT WILLIAM AND THE PRESIDENCY DIVISION—*Including 43 Stations and Cantonments.*					
1 Regiment 53rd Foot	1 Company 1 Horse Field Battery	None	14 Regts.	7 Companies 1 Horse Field Battery	2 Regts.
DINAPORE DIVISION—28 *Stations and Cantonments.*					
1 Regiment 10th Foot 4 Companies of Invalids	2 Companies 1 Horse Lt. Fd. Battery 1 Bullock Battery	None	11 Regts.	2 Companies 1 Bullock Fd. Battery	3 Regts. and 4 Troops
CAWNPORE DIVISION—17 *Stations, including Oude.*					
1 Regiment 32nd Foot	2 Companies with Horse Field Battery	None	13 Regts.	6 Companies 3 Field Batteries	4 Regts.
OUDE IRREGULAR FORCE.					
None	None	None	10 Regts.	None	3 Regts.
SAUGOR DISTRICT.					
None	2 Companies 2 Lt. Field Batteries	None	5 Regts.	None	6 Regts.
TOTAL SOUTH OF MEERUT.					
3 Regiments	7 Companies	None	53 Regts.	18 Companies and Batteries	14 Regts.
MEERUT DIVISION.					
2 Regiments	2 Troops H. A. 3 Companies with Lt. Fd. Batteries	1 Regt.	16 Regts.	2 Lt. Field Batteries	2 Regts.

European			Native		
Infantry	Artillery	Cavalry	Infantry	Artillery	Cavalry
Gwalior and Central India Contingents—16 *Stations.*					
None	None	None	15 Regts.	5 Regts.	5 Companies
Sirhind Division—12 *Stations.*					
4 Regiments	2 Troops H. A. and Head-Quarters 1 Battery Fd. Artillery	1 Regt.	8 Regts.	1 Troop H.A.	4 Regts.
Lahore Division—13 *Stations.*					
3 Regiments	3 Troops H. A. and 7 Comp. F. A.	None	11 Regts.	2 Troops H. A. and 3 Comps Fd.A.	3 Regts.
Peshawur Division—11 *Stations.*					
3 Regiments	2 Troops H. A. and 6 Comp. F. A.	None	9 Regts.	1 Company F. A.	6 Regts.
Sind Saugor Division—7 *Stations.*					
1 Regiment	None	None	9 Regts.	1 Troop H.A. 1 Company F. A.	2 Regts.
Burmah—5 *Stations.*					
2 Regiments	None	None	1 Regt. Numerous Madras Regts. and Batteries	None	None
Punjab Force.					
None	None	None	5 Regts.	4 Batteries	5 Regts.
Grand Total.					
18 Regts.	9 Troops H. A. 23 Comp. F. A.	2 Regts.	127 Regts.	4 Troops H. A. 35 Batteries F. A.	44 Regts.

Thus in the extensive territory, from Agra to the sea in a south-easterly direction, the entire European force at our disposal was under two thousand men, the native army in the same space being at least sixty thousand. From Agra to Peshawur in a north-westerly

line, the British troops numbered twelve thousand to eighty thousand of the native army. The extraordinary disproportion shown in these figures especially in the lower provinces would be truly ludicrous, but that it was so unhappily tragic.

Was it surprising, then, that it was said of us in many of the native despatches intercepted after the outbreak, 'The English army is extinct'? Assuredly it was invisible. Was it surprising that the sepoy army looking around, seeing no counterpoise to their own power, recognising their strength as we had taught them to use it, and vain of their completeness, their discipline, and their renown, should, forgetting or underestimating the value of the European element in their constitution, imagine that the empire which they supported so successfully and so long for the English, which was in their hands, they might hold as easily and as well for themselves? As a matter of fact not only is it comprehensible that they should think so, but it was an opinion which prevailed largely in England when the news of the outbreak first arrived.

It was said there: 'How strange that this obvious anger was not seen and provided against! how culpably careless must they have been in whose hands the Government of India lay, not to perceive the truth which stared them in the face!' But then, as now, preparation had been made to ensure disaster. A limit

had been carefully imposed on the Directors of the East India Company beyond which they were prohibited from raising their European army. And that limit had been fixed at 12,200 men! That is to say, the Imperial Government had carefully deprived the Company of the only means which could by any possibility have preserved their empire.

Now, when all our arrangements are supposed to be beyond cavil or criticism, we have 70,000 English troops in India. But the European force sanctioned to be maintained by the Company that achieved the possession was little more than one-sixth of what is now considered necessary. It is true that the local force of 12,200 men for a million of square miles of territory was supplemented by an addition from the Imperial army; but, all told, the numbers never amounted to one-eighth of the native army, nor to one-fourth of what they ought to have been.

Then after the outbreak, popular clamour, always in extremes, was swift to blame the Company and the Company's officers, ignored all they had done, all that they had suffered.

The prestige of our name, of our rule for a century, the moral force of the supremacy so long unquestioned, and which we had so long relied on over-much—for it was all we had to rely upon—was now denied altogether, and even a project for giving up the empire, and for

retiring from a hopeless struggle, was entertained, and gravely discussed, and advocated by a respectable minority of the English Press. Whence had arisen this mysterious power, 'this 'prestige,' that had sustained our rule so long, which weakened the hands of our revolted subjects, even in the first hour of their anticipated triumph? It had been based upon the often proved and admitted superiority of fighting power over the people opposed to us. Upon that it rested; upon that it would rest still.

But much as prestige can do, powerful as its influence is, it is subject, like every other force, to be put to the test in practical affairs; and therefore after set measures had worked for many years to exclude the renewal of the sources of our substantive strength, when growing and enforced numerical weakness became more and more apparent, was it astonishing—was it not certain—that as material strength decayed moral force should wane, leaving us at last exposed to the attacks of those once our servants, whom we had elevated above their proper sphere, who fancied they saw in our failure their own immediate and natural advantage, and in our adversity their own certain opportunity?

This, and this only, was the cause of the Mutiny. The annexation of Oude, on which so much stress has been laid, was the event which only consummated a

disastrous policy long pursued. It precipitated the explosion for which the train had long and carefully been laid.

A large kingdom equalling in size the mother-country of the invaders, teeming with an armed population already supplying the bulk of the native soldiery, was declared under a stroke of the pen a portion of our dominion; and then we proceeded to display our title to it, and to enforce our decree by an addition, not to our British troops, but of some ten thousand more men of the very class and of the people whose liberties we thus effaced—to the native army, at whose predilections and interests we struck a decisive blow!

Surely this was an extravagance of self-confidence, the very madness of arrogance.

But the evil did not rest here. When the feeling of the native army became fairly apparent to the various sections of the community, all classes became infected with the spirit of the revolution. Naturally both Hindoo and Mahomedan dynasties, that owed to us their decadence, strove alike to profit by our misfortunes.

The descendant of a Mahratta freebooter rivalled in fierce hatred and ferocity towards us the last representative of the long line of Mogul emperors; the Nana of Bithoor and the King of Delhi, opposite poles of the native confederacy, alike shared the murderous

spirit which wreaked its savage animosity on women and children of the detested British.

Some independent States, foreseeing peril to themselves in the spread of anarchy and the thorough success of revolt, declared for us. Some wavered, but of our own provinces there was but one on whose fealty we had any reason to rely.

That was the newly acquired province of the Punjab, the province where alone, as we have seen, a visible proportion of British soldiers was present to maintain their right of conquest, and where the bulk of the population bore deep and hereditary hatred to the classes arrayed against us.

With this one great fundamental cause carrying on its inevitable work, it seems as inconsequential and absurd to dissect stories like that of the greased cartridges, or to discuss trivialities in the regimental routine of the native army, in the way of imputing to such things any effect in producing a mutiny, as it would be to seek to determine the law of storms by gathering up and analysing the shattered fragments borne before the blast of the cyclone.

These things were the waifs of the tempest, not its cause.

If the European army were again reduced to the proportion it bore to the native army in 1857 there would be another revolt to-morrow.

Had there been 70,000 British troops in India that year the Mutiny would never have taken place.

But one of the most extraordinary and one of the most unjust inferences ever drawn hastily from political events was at one time deduced from those of 1857 in attributing those dire phenomena to the European officers of the native army; charging them with having wrought the calamities by their relaxation of the bonds of discipline, and having, by a neglect of their duty, permitted their influence with their men to decline: the truth being that they had done their duty all too well.

It was due mainly to their efforts, to the admirable organisation, and the very state of efficiency to which they had sedulously cultivated it, that the native army owed its power: an inferior force would have been less dangerous. A native army may be too efficient if we have no counterpoise to its strength, for we thus put the servant into the master's place. The confidence of the sepoys in their own training and skill in arms, taught them by the British officer, was at the very root of the movement.

Putting this out of sight for a moment, and also the consideration that had there been any ground for the calumny that, as a body, the officers had neglected their relations with their men, the Government more than the individuals would have been to blame, the

whole history of after events goes to prove the exact converse of such a supposition. Notwithstanding the extraordinary temptation that possessed the Indian soldiery to revolt, the apparently inevitable certainty of success, if they were unanimous, so thorough was the hold, so marvellous the influence, of those officers over their men, that in very few instances was mutiny complete; in most it was hesitating and timid, and in some it was altogether quelled by that influence alone; and it was so in garrisons, where the native soldiers were to their English officers as a hundred to one, where, in the midst of a hostile population, the latter were as raindrops to the ocean; and where there was neither let nor hindrance, under God's providence, to unamenable rebellion except the personal ascendency of the men who have since been so maligned.

Take a single instance, that of the garrison at Saugor, Central India. Purely native (excepting twenty artillerymen), isolated at a great distance from the possibility of European reinforcement, it was obvious to all that months must elapse before the troops, if they mutinied, could be attacked or disturbed. A neighbouring State, Jhansi, was in the first flush of successful revolution. What was it, then, that kept this great majority of the Saugor garrison true to their alien masters but that personal ascendency which was so curiously underrated and so gratuitously vilified at the very time it

accomplished so much? There was literally nothing else. With the influence directly exercised by the ten or a dozen English officers over the thousand sepoys who formed a regiment, there must be considered also the result of the loss to the native army, after it had mutined, of the leaders whom alone they had been accustomed to obey. These could not be immediately replaced, for habit is as important to the exercise of command as it is to that of obedience. The sense of responsibility suddenly imposed never fails to perplex the unaccustomed and untrained mind. The doubtful, hesitating order receives doubtful and hesitating acquiescence. Distrust of themselves was so palpable amongst the native officers who tried to lead the rebels against us, that their followers caught the sense of consciousness of their unfitness for authority, and desultory and uncombined action was the result. If we suppose for an instant that our native army had been from the first officered from their own ranks; that the victories they had achieved, though gained side by side with British troops, had been won under native leaders, who had acquired the experience and influence of command, can we doubt that the Mutiny of 1857 would have assumed far more formidable dimensions than it did?

The idea, often advocated by pure theorists, that it is our duty voluntarily to renounce our own interests by deliberately placing ourselves at a disadvantage

with inferior and hostile races for their benefit and for our destruction, in giving them the experience and influence of command, in entrusting to them the leadership of our troops, must be relegated to the limbo of shams, with which practical common sense has nothing to do. We take for granted that we desire to keep our Indian empire for ourselves, however we may rule it for the welfare of its people. And assuming that we want an Indian army for our purposes, and not for their own, the conclusion we are forced to is that its leaders should be ourselves, and that the English officer with the native regiment should be now what he was in 1857—our mainstay with that section of the force which maintains us where we are.

In that year the tide of rebellion was actually stemmed, if not turned, before a single English soldier of the reinforcing army could share in the conflict. The advance of Renaud's detachment and Neill's column was commenced before the first instalment of the troops diverted from China could reach Indian shores; and, successful as was the aftersweep of conquest by Havelock and Lord Clyde, the first impulse of victory was given before they appeared on the scene.

And this was due under Heaven to the indomitable fortitude and courage of the English officers and men—military or civil—who faced that fierce danger first; to that spirit of heroism which, whether dis-

played in a solitary and individual instance like that of Frank Gordon of Abergeldie, who died alone at Jhansi after killing twenty-five of the enemy with his own hand, or in that of a leader like Henry Lawrence at Lucknow, who, animating every soul of his party with his own invincible resolution, forgot nothing that could serve his country and yielded nothing to his foes but his own life, can never be thought upon without producing a thrill of admiration and pride which is almost reverence.

From the above considerations we deduce the conclusion that the number of European officers with the Company's regular native army was one of the elements in its constitution which was most favourable to our interests. This view is further corroborated by the fact, that where the irregular regiments, i.e. those officered by four or five Englishmen only, did mutiny, they did so far more completely, and they became far more formidable adversaries, than the Regular Army; more completely because they were less under British influence, and they were more formidable because they had a certain leadership which the others lacked.

The Gwalior Contingent and the Oude Irregular Force are instances in point. These rose unanimously and *en masse*, and the former achieved a success in the open field in the action with General Wyndham before Cawnpore—the only one the mutineers could boast of.

The irregular troops which did not mutiny were composed of classes already at bitter feud with the sepoys.

The admitted efficiency and utility of the Punjab Irregular Force are often cited to show that the system of employing only a few selected officers with native troops is a good one. It should be remembered that no parallel circumstances are afforded in the condition of that force as compared with that of the old native army. It is in numbers a mere fraction of the latter, the magnitude of which was a danger. It has been in existence not a fourth part of the time of the latter, whose age was a danger. It has never been concentrated in great cities like the latter, whose distribution was a danger. It has never stood, nor could it be expected to stand, in anything approaching the relation to the empire at large as that army to which it is compared.

In campaigns of any magnitude it has been invariably reinforced in great proportion by British troops, Goorkhas, and native regiments of the Line. Admirable as it is as a frontier force, it is not on a scale which justifies it as a standard of reference in considering the organisation of the whole native army.

It should be remembered that the system by which this army was provided with officers was one of slow growth; it may be inferred that this growth depended on

the necessities shown by experience, that it was discovered practically that where five British officers were good in action, ten were better, and twenty better still; and that thus in fact what had been originally the 'irregular system' had developed into the 'line' or 'regular' system, not by theory, but as a result of very long and very practical experience. To ignore that, and to jump to the conclusion, from reviewing the events of 1857, that because a native regiment has few British officers, it is therefore better than one with many, is equivalent to supposing that the key-stone of an arch is a defect in structure in a building whose foundations have been shattered by an earthquake.

In reverting then, as we have done, to a system we had outgrown, we are committing a grave error, one too, which, if reasoning is not wholly at fault, lies on the surface so that all who run may read; for it seems to be still allowed that the presence of numerous English officers with a native regiment on field service is a positive and most material advantage. In war their number is always temporarily augmented—that is to say, that no sooner is the native army employed in its legitimate and normal avocation, fighting, than an approximation to the line system is reverted to. Such an augmentation, though better than none, is at best but a palliation of an evil which need never have existed, and which we have created with no apparent

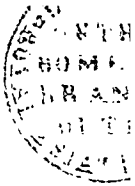
object. For we had an abundance of officers who were thrust out of employment to satisfy a theory. But it is obvious that their services, merely taken up for a time and with strangers, will lack much of the value which long regimental association confers. Mutual respect, confidence, and attachment between men and officers, such as can and do exist despite of difference of creed and colour, do not grow up in a day. That they are of the very first importance no soldier will deny; and in any system which does not foster them there are seeds of mischief which will certainly develope under natural and inevitable laws.

The old regimental system did foster them; they abounded in the old army of the Company. They could not, it is true, arrest the flood of the political blunders and their consequences, which we have reviewed, any more than a breakwater can stop the spring tides; but, when the waves of revolution broke over the land, they did much to fend the shock and save life. We have destroyed the regimental system, one which, as we have seen, grew out of practical needs, and one which the experience of all nations has adopted as the best form for military purposes. With what have we replaced it?

We have first of all diminished the strength of our most valuable materials, and we have next placed those weakened materials in such arrangement as shall afford them the least mutual support and cohesion. Finally

to conclude the comparison of the old army with the new one, supposing the latter were placed in precisely the same circumstances as the former, and we were to reproduce the political situation occupied just before the Mutiny, supposing we were to withdraw two-thirds of our British troops and were to replace in the hands of the native army all the cities, forts, treasuries, arsenals, and guns which were confided to the sepoys in 1856; does any sane man believe that a superiority of quality or organisation now existent in our native army would ensure the permanence and stability of our empire, not for a century, but for a month?

But, if it would not, then all the arguments which base the rebellion and the catastrophe of 1857 on the defectiveness of the native army at that period fall to the ground. All the clamour which shrieked for change, any change, which cried out upon the old beliefs, the old traditions, the old ways, 'Away with them!'—all this was a vain and empty clamour. And it would seem that, instead of turning our misfortunes to account, dispassionately inquiring into their circumstances, and calmly remedying the defects which gave them birth, we merely rushed into hasty assumptions and flew to still more hasty remedies, and have now the task before us, first of removing the badly designed and worse executed portions of our recent work, and then of reconstructing a fresh edifice.



CHAPTER VII.

THE MAIN RELIANCE.

THE means to be adopted, then, for the defence of our Indian empire may be resolved into three principal measures: the reorganisation of the British army in that dominion; the reorganisation of the native army; and the taking up by both of an advantageous strategical position.

For the first of these we have already seen some reasons. The arguments against the localisation of a European force may be summed up in the words of the Duke of Wellington as given by Mr. Clode: 'It cannot be made a colonial corps without destroying its character and strength. A terrible and disgraceful mode of losing the possession of any part of His Majesty's dominions would be by means of a mutiny of the officers of a local or a colonial army employed to garrison it. Yet that is what we must look to if the army is to be employed as a colonial army, never to quit the colonies from the day they enter the service.'

Admitting 'the mutiny of the officers' to be a danger to be apprehended and guarded against, the checks against its possibility in the time of the Company are sufficiently distinct. There were then three different constituent elements, each acting as a counterpoise to the other, viz., the Imperial army, the local British force, and the native army. It is not possible to imagine a perfect unanimity of feeling amongst all the three to mutiny together. When the third alone did so, it rose *without* its officers, and that, as we have seen, was one principal cause of its failure. Difficult as it is to imagine a mutiny having its source in the disaffection of the officers, such a contingency is certainly more possible now than it was before 1857, for there are now but two powers in India, the British and the native; and the latter is so comparatively insignificant that it could hardly act as an efficient counterpoise.

The real check is the loyalty of the officers themselves and the infinitesimally small temptation to mutiny in such a country as India. Cut off from England as rebels and exiles, what could repay English gentlemen for the loss of all which they hold dear, even if revolt could succeed and the empire passed into their hands? Without reinforcements, their native subjects for an hour would speedily make head against an usurped authority. Dissension amongst themselves

would infallibly ensue, and the first advance of the force sent to re-establish legitimate rule would overwhelm a rebellion so incoherent as that which we are imagining. In short, this danger in India may be dismissed as purely illusory.

But even if it were not so, it would only be an argument against the whole of the British force in that country being localised. There seems no apparent necessity for this. The main object in view is the provision of a reserve in India which shall not be liable to removal in any emergency, real or supposed. Another object little inferior to this, is the maintenance of an adequate force with a minimum of expense. We have not only a present scarcity of men, but are yearly experiencing greater difficulty in keeping up even the insufficient numbers we have.[1] The present system of enlistment is failing in every point. To recruit a soldier to serve six years, even for service in Europe, is to deprive the country of his work in the army just when he is beginning to prove useful to it and to repay the cost of his training. To do this for service in a country distant as India, is to add the cost of his transport to that of training, and further that of bringing him back again after perhaps two or

[1] See the statistics on this head given in Captain H. W. L. Hime's Essay on the Recruiting Question, 'Journal of the United Service Institution,' No. LXXX. of 1875.

three years, wasting time, money, and material uselessly; the soldier's own personal sympathies and predilections being all the other way, he recognising plainly that which our statesmen ignore, viz., that service in India, to be advantageous either to the State or the individual, must be for a certain length of time.

Mr. Clode truly observes: 'It was not the fact of serving the Company instead of the Crown that made the difference between the two armies in India, but that Indian service attracted to the ranks of the Company's army a different class of men to that which entered the Royal army.' That is to say, the Company's army was popular and answered its purpose, while the other is unpopular and enormously expensive.

On the other hand, it is sometimes brought forward against a local army that it is liable to deteriorate in point of smartness, appearance, and discipline; and there is a vague impression abroad among people unconnected with India, that the Company's troops (European) were inferior in these respects to the Royal army. To the well-informed this will appear altogether a misapprehension.

The truth is, that as to drill there was an absence of rigidity which often displeased the pedants whose only school had been the barrack square. The school of the Company's troops had been the field of war, and they anticipated in fact a change which has recently become

noticeable in the ranks of the British army throughout the world, and sacrificed something of extreme precision for mobility.

An instance of this may be observed most distinctly in the Horse Artillery. The celerity of movement and defiance of obstacles of ground, the 'dash' of this branch of the service in the Company's army, was the subject of universal remark. Taught by the exigencies of practical warfare, their rapidity of manœuvre exceeded anything learnt or practised at Woolwich, and much of the credit of the present organisation and smartness of this branch is due to lessons taught in India.

If the 'march past' of the regiment of the British Line was a little steadier, a little more like the 'wall' which was their favourite type of excellence, in all the equally essential qualities for light infantry and skirmishing in broken and difficult ground and the loose order of fighting now in vogue, the superiority lay rather with the local troops. Such disasters as befel the 24th Foot in the low brushwood at Chillianwallah, and the 10th Foot in the jungles of Arrah, were utterly unknown in the annals of the Company's British army. Indeed, in all essentials of soldiering the services of the latter place their efficiency beyond all reasonable doubt or cavil.

But, as we have said, there seems to be no sound

reason why the whole of the European troops in India should be local. All that is really required is a force beyond the disposal of chance, of any political party which may be temporarily uppermost in England, and, ignorant and he[illegible] alike of its requirements and legitimate uses, [illegible]ed with power to move it at will. We should find no [illegible]tical difficulties in raising a local English army for India. Those which are operating now to the detriment of any scheme proposed for the creation of an adequate force in England could not apply to this. When Burke said that 'an armed disciplined body is in its essence dangerous to liberty,' he spoke to Englishmen, and echoed their thoughts in regard to England. But the phrase has no significance applied to an army necessary to preserve a subject and a conquered territory. For India we should enlist a sufficient force to hold it. The period engaged for should be long, and the service made desirable by adequate pay, and certainty of adequate pension, the provision for old age; the head-quarters and training grounds of the battalion should be fixed in the hills. Thus the constant strain on England for recruits to supply the places of casualties by death or by invaliding, or by the expiration of short terms of service, would be reduced to a minimum. We could still keep a certain portion of the general service troops also in India, and so lighten the burden of the English tax-payers, and

keep up a spirit of emulation between the two descriptions of the force in India, and we could also gain the best possible testimony—that of experience—as to the comparative value and cost of each.

The scheme suggests itself in the presence of the complete failure of the present system and its enormous expense. There can be nothing more absurd from an economical point of view than this plan of ours of enlisting a soldier for six years, keeping and training him for two of these during which time he does not pay for his keep, then going to the expense of shipping him to India, where he will probably have to go through a course of acclimatisation, making him more or less sickly for another year or two, of tending him in hospital, and finally, just as he attains the prime of youth and becomes a skilled and valuable soldier, of bringing him back to England and turning him loose on the public-houses. To place him in the reserve even is a waste of good material. Some such scheme as that we advocate will be forced upon us in the event of war. Why not anticipate it while there is yet time to use skill and judgment?

For if we can barely furnish the necessary reliefs now, the difficulties of filling vacancies caused by a campaign will be insurmountable save by new methods. These must not be left untried until war renders them indispensable. When failure would involve terrible

disaster the time for experiment has passed by. Armies can no longer be improvised. Any serious mistake in war would be infinitely more disastrous to Great Britain than to any other Power in the world. For our national existence no longer depends upon the safety of our island home and citadel.

Within our United Kingdom we could not supply ourselves with one-third of the food necessary to its inhabitants' lives from day to day. The whole antecedent history of the earth could furnish no parallel to the state of this country hemmed in by a combination of its enemies. Yet such a contingency, implying events more horrible than the imagination dares to conjure up, has been contemplated more than once by shrewd foreign calculators on the decline and fall of the British Empire. Not the fate of Jerusalem could even shadow forth the catastrophe this event would bring. Even its possibility should render the construction of an Indian Reserve Force of 50,000 men at any cost, a cheap defence comparatively to the evil. Whether we maintain 70,000 or 120,000 English troops in India is a question which would not arouse the jealousy of the English people for their liberties, though it would make a vast difference in the degree of safety of their possessions. None of the difficulties which at present press upon all schemes of recruiting at home would apply to the measure now advocated. We may rely on this,

that a successful blow struck at India, would be followed by a blow struck home. If we have made, whether from jealousy of our liberties, or from any other cause, military service so unpopular in England as to entail social disgrace on the recruit of respectable parentage, then all the more reason exists for rendering it popular in the quarter where it is most essential. Imaginary as the catastrophe may seem, to which we have referred, its possibility is founded upon a reasonable calculation of our true position compared with that of our neighbours; of a comparison of our means with their means, and of the influence on both which is being now exerted by material progress and the natural and unceasing changes working on the political situation.

It is necessary here to advert briefly to the question of recruiting for home service. Captain Hime, R.A., a very able and well-informed writer, recently answered it by asserting that universal conscription was absolutely necessary even to provide for the defence of our island home itself. He gives a concise but very clear description of the English system of voluntary enlistment, from which he deduces that it never was a success, that it is breaking down now, and will in all probability collapse altogether before long. After glancing at the past history of the system, he said: 'Finally, in 1870 was passed an Act which aimed at 1. improving the social position of the soldier; 2. mobilising the active and

reserve forces; 3. popularising the army, and 4. forming an efficient reserve.' 'These were splendid aims indeed, and what were the means adopted to gain them? A short service act without bounty. Mrs. Partington's exploit was nothing to this. That excellent woman, as Sydney Smith tells us, lived by the sea. One morning an unusually high tide invaded her cottage, and when the neighbours came to her assistance they found her sweeping out the sea, with a besom. Her well-intended efforts were futile. She was equal to a bowl or a puddle, but she was no match for the Atlantic Ocean! Acts of Parliament and War Office circulars have a certain power, but they cannot stem the tide of popular opinion. The Act of 1870 has not improved the social position of the soldier, it cannot be said to have popularised the army, and it certainly has not formed an efficient reserve . . . Far from being able to stand the strain of war, it is confessedly incapable of satisfying single-handed the demands of our peace establishment.' Captain Hime proceeds to argue that enlisting for short service has always failed because, 'while the prospect of a pension has always been necessarily held out to men enlisting for a long and life service, it has always been as necessarily withheld from recruits for short service.' 'In 1871 5,861 men deserted from the army; 5,702 deserted in 1873.'

'Unlimited or life service is equally objectionable

from a political and medical point of view. The political objections will be found in Burke's short but exhaustive speech on the subject, delivered in 1783. The medical objections are summed up in Table E,[1] which has been compiled from the 'Army Medical Blue Book,' 1872, p. 48.

'Long service has never suffered so severely from want of recruits and from desertion as short service; it is proof against the political and medical arguments, before which life service justly fell in 1847; but in common with both, and indeed with every conceivable form of voluntary enlistment, it is open to three fatal objections. It can only supply us at an enormous cost with an army which, in point of quality, is the very worst we could raise in England, and which numerically is so feeble as to render it impossible for us either to defend the country successfully in case of invasion, or to play a fitting part in any Continental war in which we may be involved.' Captain Hime displays a vast mass of evidence on these points which need not be discussed here; but we may observe that the above objections do not apply in the case of voluntary enlistment for long periods for exclusively Indian service. In the first place, the cost would not fall on England, but on India, for whose safety it is worth while

[1] P. 121, No. LXXX., Vol. XIX., 'Journal of R. United Service Institution.'

to pay out of her own revenue; in the next place, the quality of the troops so raised, if as good as that formerly obtained by the East India Company, would be good enough for all practical purposes; and lastly, because local service in India never was unpopular in former times, and need not be in these. It is clear, moreover, to Captain Hime that the universal conscription which he would enforce for the defence of Great Britain could not be employed to raise an army for Indian service; it would be wholly intolerable, and no Government could undertake such a scheme. He says himself. 'It may be said to be a monstrous contradiction, first to prove the voluntary system to be a failure, and then to propose a voluntary army for India and the colonies. I reply in the first place that we have no choice in the matter. A conscript army is necessarily a short service army, and with such an army it would be practically impossible to organise a system of Indian and colonial relief that would work.' Captain Hime concludes thus: Conscription may be unwelcome to the officers of the army, it may be irksome to the poor, and it may be hateful to the rich; but conscription is inevitable because it is a logical and necessary consequence of the individual progress of modern Europe.'

'If war breaks out we shall have to choose between conscription on the one hand, and defeat and humiliation on the other. Our house is founded upon the sand,

and when the storms of war descend upon it, it must fall, and great will be its fall.'

Now if Captain Hime has demonstrated this truth (and the opinion that he has done so is widely prevalent among the best informed of the community) in reference to the defence of the citadel, how much more irresistible is the conclusion that the means found grudgingly to spare for India out of those so inadequate to the wants of the empire at large must be supplemented, and reinforced! We may not altogether share the opinions of Captain Hime as to the extreme weakness of the home reserves, our militia and volunteers, but no one in any degree cognisant of the nature of armies can rank them with a regular army. But even these, which might certainly aid in repelling an attack on our own shores, are wholly wanting to our Indian armies. For these we have absolutely no reserves. Yet we must be out of all measure sanguine —optimists run mad—if we dare to suppose that in a region like India we shall never need reserves. If we imagine war at all, the losses occasioned by it must be filled up—and whence would they be so? From the army in England as Captain Hime displays its conditions? Any further weakening of the home defences would appear completely suicidal.

But let us turn from the contemplation of the

first to the second measure of defence, viz., the reorganisation of the native army in India.

The first thing we are called on to observe is the extraordinary paucity of European officers with it, and the growing weakness of the links which connect them with the native ranks.

And next, the weakness in numbers of the native army for the purposes to which it is devoted. These evils are the growth of the few years since the abolition of the Company.

Because in the absence of ordinary precaution, and of any adequate power to restrain them, the sepoys of the old native army revolted, therefore the only one useful influence in it, the one good point about its organisation—a fair sufficiency of the English element with the native material—was hastily abolished! Because a simple and admirable regimental system failed to prevent a rebellion, which sprang of causes wide and vast as human error, in the breasts of whole nations held in subjection, no visible means of sustaining that empire being displayed by the conquerors, therefore that also was hastily abolished. And it has been replaced by one which has succeeded in combining all the blunders which the most ingenious imagination could contrive, if it strove to illustrate in one word all the mistakes incident to human incapacity. This scheme has for its

chief feature an institution known as the Indian Staff Corps.

At once cumbrous and costly, unjust and unpopular, inefficient and incapable of adaptation, it has failed at every point of its intended purpose.

To explain this, and to discover the origin of the scheme, we must look back to the condition of the native army before the Mutiny.

A practice only defensible on the ground of necessity existed by which the European officers of that army were rendered available for a number of duties other than those of their profession. A multitude of various employments urgently demanded their services. Engineers were wanted, and some hundreds of officers were drawn from the native regiments to swell the department of public works. Magistrates, collectors, and judges were required. They were supplied from the same source, to fill the various commissions which supplemented the Civil Service. Police officers were similarly found, the staff of the army, the commissariat, the stud, the survey department, all these filled their vacant offices from the same source. There were irregular regiments, native contingents, a political service, all requiring officers; and the result was that, as all these various employments were generally more lucrative and held out better promise of distinction than mere regimental duty could offer, the drain not

only drew off more officers from the native army than could be spared from it, but it took the best of them, the most energetic, the most accomplished and capable, and the most ambitious.

The necessity for filling up the deficiency caused by this drain was generally felt and acknowledged. The idea of a Staff Corps, as originally contemplated, was to enrol the officers who had left their regiments for these various employments into a separate body, admission to which should in future depend on the attainment of a given standard of qualification proved by examination, and the vacancies so caused were to be filled up by new appointments to the regiments from which the Staff Corps officers were thus drawn.

The promotion of the latter was no longer to proceed by regimental seniority, but by length of service, each higher grade being reached by so many years' duty in the lower. Promotion in the regimental lists continuing as before, but considerably accelerated by the removal of the staff officers, would have gained an advantage greatly desired, for the seniority system was generally too sluggish in operation, and the scheme would thus have worked well both as regarded the staff and the regiments. But this was never carried out. After the events of 1857, when a re-organisation of the native army became a necessity, the idea was revived in a shape which was so contrived

as to perpetuate and enhance all the evils, and to relinquish all the proposed advantages. The drain of officers from regiments was always admitted to be one of the greatest defects of the old system; by the new the number of regimental officers was reduced to one half of the former minimum. It had been considered that no sufficient guarantee of the qualification of officers in staff employ was afforded by the old plan; according to the new all the officers of the army were invited indiscriminately to enter the so-called 'Staff' Corps. Regimental promotion had been avowedly too slow for efficiency formerly; any acceleration was now carefully provided against by an arbitrary decree that the names of officers who entered the Staff Corps should be retained on the regimental lists or cadres in italics (i.e. as a sham), on purpose to 'regulate' or retard promotion in them. In the old system an arrangement was permitted, and indeed encouraged, by which a remedy was found to mitigate the undue slowness of promotion. This was a subscription privately raised by the officers of each regiment to form a retiring fund, whereby the senior officers on receipt of certain sums of money were enabled to make way for younger men. This practice, which was of essential service to the State in stimulating without cost the retirement of veterans in favour of younger and more energetic officers, was summarily terminated

by the new scheme in a way which ultimately threw a greater burden on the revenues, which deprived the older officers of a provision for which they had paid largely and made a sacrifice during many years of service, which stopped the promotion of the younger officers, and which inflicted on young and old alike a heavy pecuniary loss.

The next result of this notable scheme was the throwing out of employ of some hundreds of officers whose only fault lay in having no interest or influential friends at head-quarters. While the *esprit de corps* of the native army languished on the extinction of its only causes, the regimental organisation, traditions, and spirit, the officers so sorely needed with it were relegated to what was called 'general duty,' which was, in fact, no duty at all. As if to omit nothing which could cause hardship to individuals and injury to the State, some minor privileges and inducements to old officers to retire, granted by the Court of Directors, were carefully looked out and eliminated. Officers of twenty-two years' service had been heretofore permitted to retire on the pension of their regimental rank; but this was denied to the Staff Corps. The expressed inducement held out by it had been increased rapidity of promotion; but care had been taken to render this promotion as valueless as possible. The pay of each rank was, in the first place, reduced ten per cent. all round, and this in the face of a

great fall in the value of money and in that of the rupee, which was the denomination of currency used. Even the little pittance which officers of the Company's army had been permitted to remit to their families in England at par, was now made subject to the usual law of exchange; so that the poor married subaltern could now send but 1*s.* 9*d.* for his rupee to his wife or children. In short, all the measures which were adopted tended to afflict or distress the officers who passed through the fire and whirlwind of 1857, and who one and all 'had deserved well of their country.' That there were traitors in their own camp who bartered truth for trinkets and ribbons, honesty for money, and justice for place and power, is certainly one explanation of all this wrong. But the truth has been told often enough and distinctly enough to have permitted both justice and policy to have played a wider part in the new organisation, if public opinion in England had been directed to a question which involves so much to the nation.

Some attempts at redress have recently been made. The doors for retirement have been partially opened for the old, and employment is being sparingly found for the young. But these remedies need application on a larger scale. An auxiliary native force being recognised as necessary, its organisation should be based on the only system which has ever succeeded in any army—

the regimental system. The regiment should be the officer's home, the command of it the object of his legitimate ambition. His duty to his men should be learned in their company, and their trust in him will be cemented by long acquaintance and mutual services.

The so-called 'amalgamation' of the Company's army with the Royal service has been one continued anomaly from first to last. The officers at first the victims of the Mutiny, have since endured misrepresentation and injury at the hands of the country which they had served so well.

The word 'amalgamation,' so far as they have been concerned, is a misnomer. There has been no genuine amalgamation at all, nor has any such process been possible. With different means, aims, prospects, training, and requirements, the officers of the old Company's army and of the Royal army were distinct elements, quite incapable of fusion into one body. By far the larger proportion of the former were men who, without private fortune, came to India because the pay and prospects for poor men were sufficient to promise them an independence. Their thoughts and expectations were turned to a career in India. Certain drawbacks there were—the exile, the climate, severance from families and from home ties, were all accepted as part of the bargain, and were paid for by certain advantages of

pay and pension. The Company's officer went to India as a boy; if he ever left it, it was often as a man advanced in life, and always as one trained in a particular groove, which he could scarcely leave to attempt fortune in any other vocation.

How could a class composed of such men form an 'amalgam' with another whose objects and interests were utterly diverse; composed of men who for the most part hated India, who never looked forward to remaining in it one hour longer than they could possibly help; ignorant of the country, of the people, of the language; whose promotion in their profession was arranged in a different mode; who generally possessed private means; whose possession of such was, indeed, as we have seen, contemplated in the theory of the national constitution; and who could exchange at will to serve in any part of the world they liked?

There must be some elements of affinity in particles which shall truly amalgamate. But in the case of these two armies there was no affinity, nor could there be any reciprocity of advantages. Although there are many instances of officers of the Royal service holding lucrative appointments in India, we look in vain for examples of Indian officers holding such situations in England or any English dominion out of India. There are none holding appointments on the general, divisional, or brigade staff at home, while half those in India are

held by the Royal army. Many of these latter are in command of native regiments, but there are no Indian officers in command of British regiments. It is not expected that there should be any; but this one-sided arrangement has had the effect of throwing a large number of officers of the Indian service out of employ. We have been told that the general effect of the measures taken has been to give an impetus to promotion generally, and that the position of the Company's officers has been on the whole improved. How much more rapidly, we are told, is promotion gained in the Staff Corps than it used to be in the old native infantry regiments. That a few officers have gained by it is true, but more have suffered. A rise in rank may have been expedited, but rank is a relative advantage only. To promote the vast majority of officers at once leaves them all in their mutual relations very much where they were. If their promotion is to be purchased by loss of employment, an inferior scale of pay, and a degraded position, it becomes valueless. Under the old régime a regimental field-officer invariably held some post of importance and emolument; there are now scores of such doing 'general duty,' or doing the duty of subalterns.

It has been said that the worst use to which a man can be put is to hang him. Perhaps a worse use still is to enforce idleness upon him; and this is the use to

which a large number of officers of the Indian army has been put.

The 'amalgamation,' then, has had these results: it has largely increased the burden on the revenues; it has weakened British influence in the native army by diminishing the British element in its composition; it has encumbered the State with men from whom employment and honourable aspirations have been wrenched away; and it has vitally injured the interests and prospects of the class which made India its adopted country. The members of this class have deserved a better fate. They have claims on their country which cannot be ignored. The pages of history recording the events of 1857 cannot yet have been altogether defaced or forgotten. The innumerable instances of daring, fortitude, and magnanimity which flash from them like lightning from a night of storm, cannot yet have paled into utter oblivion. We have, indeed, heard officers of the Indian army blamed for 'infatuation;' for overweening confidence in the fidelity of their men; for trusting their lives unreservedly, as they had done for years, to the sepoys with whom they had been brought up from boyhood; for remaining, in fact, at their posts, unwilling to doubt, unable to fear, despite the ominous and darkening signs which were thickening so fast about them. This may have been credulity. But God help the nation to whose children such credulity

is impossible! We may admit that some of the officers of the Indian army were foolish. But then, in the same sense, how foolish were the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ! how foolish the Athenians whose names were graven on the pillars of Marathon!

CHAPTER VIII.

DECAY OF EFFICIENCY.

A NATIVE auxiliary army must always be a necessity in a country such as India. In the first place, the expense of keeping up a European force sufficiently large to defend it at all points, would be a insuperable obstacle to its exclusive employment; in the next place, the native army can take without injury a great number of duties which would cause to Europeans heavy losses by disease and exposure; and in the third, considerable difficulty would be experienced in providing employment for the various classes who now find it in the ranks, were these abolished.

While, therefore, this necessity exists, officers must be appointed to organise and lead the native army; and such officers will require special training and experience. The abolition of the Company and its system has destroyed the old organisation with the result that much ignorance and folly have been at work in the new. In consequence, enlistment of the best

stamp of native soldiers is daily becoming more difficult. Distrust in the first instance lowered the demand, and, according to the universal law, the supply has since fallen off. We have lowered the national military spirit of whole races within the last seventeen years; and this, though it may have rendered the task of governing easier, is a distinct source of weakness to the empire threatened by peril from without. This has been one cause of a difficulty in recruiting. Another is due to the injudicious zeal with which the European system of discipline, interior economy, and even drill, has been forced by inexperienced British officers on the native soldiery. Many very valuable military qualities possessed by it have been 'improved' out of existence by a too rigid 'rule of thumb,' which has sought to assimilate too hastily and too closely systems dealing with dissimilar materials.

A spear is not more unlike a hatchet than is the Asiatic soldier unlike the British private. The rules of art to be laid down for the exercise of weapons differing so widely as these do in make and temper, cannot properly nor usefully be the same. A conspicuous instance in which this truth has been ignored is afforded in the native cavalry. From a want of discrimination in the method of adapting a system to the materials given, partly indeed from ignorance of the nature of those materials, a very great mistake was once before

made in the construction of this force. And this mistake is again being gradually reverted to. The Indian Light Cavalry under native leaders and with an organisation, equitation, and exercise of arms peculiarly its own, has been for a long historical period famous as a valuable and efficient force. The Rohillas, descendants of Pathans who overran and colonised Rohilcund (a district west of Oude), were as celebrated among the Mahomedans, as the Mahrattas among the Hindoos, for excellence in horsemanship and skill with the sword and lance.

In some essential respects it may be doubted if European cavalry in any age has equalled the Indian. That arm has always been a favourite with Asiatics, and their greatest battles have been won by its agency.

The bitting and training of the horse, the shape and material of the saddle, and the lightness of hand and sharpness of blade of the rider, were, for purposes of personal combat, whether singly or in bodies, as near perfection as could be attained. It is no argument to the contrary that the Asiatic horsemen have been defeated by British cavalry, for the Asiatic is as a combatant inferior to the European, and moral causes are as powerful in deciding a battle as physical. As before pointed out, this fact is at the bottom of our hold of India. Whether it arises from superior courage, or strength, or stubbornness, or a combination of all three,

matters little—the fact is incontestable. But the skill on the other side is (or was) also, as a mere matter of physical excellence, quite as incontestable.

In any case, the attempt to educate away that excellence, and to substitute a system unsuited to the material to be made use of, was a great blunder.

We could not give the Rohilla nor the Mahratta the stubbornness in fight, or whatever that moral quality is which wins battles against odds, so we blunted his sword, we exchanged his sharp bit for one with which he could not hold his horse, we took away his saddle, that which he had been accustomed to from childhood, and put him on a hard, slippery, angular contrivance in which, though we succeeded in teaching him to balance himself, he never rode; and, in short, we metamorphosed a useful and efficient irregular horseman into a ludicrous travestie of an English dragoon.

The native cavalry of the regular army so manufactured was worse than useless, and was superseded by cavalry retaining many of the admirable points of the native organisation and equipment.

This was formerly designated the Irregular Cavalry, and as to the fitness of that force for its purposes there will be no dissentient voices among those officers who ever served with it.

Since the Mutiny, however, the tendency to Anglicise it—i.e. to level to a certain British standard, in

many respects unsuited to Asiatics, all the details of its organisation—has been at work, with the effect of rendering a very valuable light cavalry a bad imitation of British troopers.

Perhaps a necessary evil—certainly an invariable accompaniment—of all military pageantry, is an over-attention to points of pure display. An attractiveness of appearance, or, rather, a certain fashion of appearances, is too dearly purchased by a pressure on the individual soldier which renders the service unpopular. Something too much of this we have both in the infantry and cavalry. There is of course an emulation to rival the best possible standard, and to bring the native regiment as nearly like the British regiment in drill and smartness as it can be brought. But this should only be attempted by officers having a thorough knowledge of their men and how far the process of improving the appearance may be carried without sacrificing even more important objects.

This knowledge is not to be acquired in a day nor in a year. Therefore it should follow that the British officers with the native army should have some special training and education for their work. In other words, that they should be appointed young and brought up in their particular vocation, as for any other profession. This is but a truism, one acknowledged in every trade or calling which men follow. But it is one

which has been systematically ignored, and even derided, in India since the Mutiny.

It will be remembered that one of the chief points vulnerable to the zealous reformers who most persistently attacked the Company's system, one which was always the most vehemently denounced by them, was the filling up the appointments on the staff (including in that term all the various employments other than regimental the necessities of the State demanded) from the native line regiments. The evil was eagerly pointed at that must arise from the paucity of regimental officers, though in no instance was the number ever reduced to the present maximum. The disadvantage of tempting the most promising officers to leave their regiments for a more advantageous career in another direction was forcibly brought forward, commented upon, and inveighed against. No system could be worse, it was said; and there was truth enough, and plausible sophistry more than enough, to reduce the defence of the system to a mere plea of necessity—there being no other available source of supply to answer the demand.

At all events, it was supposed that the reformers would have avoided this error. What, then, has been the course pursued? We find the only provision in the new system for supplying the native regiments with officers repeats it with every circumstance of aggravation. The numbers supplied are far too few—fewer

than they ever were before—and they are drawn exclusively and direct from British regiments! It may be said that the vacancies in them, so created, are filled up at once, and that therefore the regiment does not suffer; but it has never been proposed to add to the establishment of officers, or even to attach an additional number of young officers destined for the native army to supply the drain. It is drawn exclusively from the present regimental complement, and thus we have at best untaught youths constantly supplying the places of men who are removed just as they become efficient. If the design were ever really carried out so as to completely fulfil its avowed object the regiments would become so many schools for young men wherewith to spend a certain term of their education, but with which they would have in no other respect concern nor interest, and the young officers of the British regiments in India, instead of being brought up to feel pride in them, would regard them as mere stepping-stones to other and better paid employment. In short, that very mistake which was so often condemned in the Company's army is being repeated now with all its worst results in the Royal army. That the system can be other than a mistake is surely not conceivable as far as regards the regiments of British troops. As regards the native army the supply drawn in this manner is inadequate as regards numbers and ill-adapted by

education. The tone of mind acquired in a British regiment is that of disparagement, or even contempt, of the native army. This is a bad augury for the commencement of a career to be passed in it, and the worst possible feeling to start with for one whose principal object will be henceforth to cultivate friendly relations with men amidst whom he is to pass his life.

The more this subject is enquired into the worse does its aspect appear. The young officers, the life and soul of every army, are conspicuous by their absence throughout the native regiments. Their places are empty, or most unwisely filled by old men of high rank, who, rather than be forced into utter idleness, will take subaltern's duties. But the harm done by the incongruity thus permitted in the service does not stop with the individual case. Rank is brought into depreciation in the minds of those with whom respect is a vital essential to discipline. When a grey-headed colonel is seen in command of a detachment under the strength of a single company, the prestige of authority which should pertain to colonel's rank is greatly lowered. And in a native force even more than in any other is prestige important.

Thus, whether we regard the actual conditions of the native army or its prospects for the future, we are compelled to observe defects of construction which must sooner or later end in collapse. The result of an overheavy and long-continued strain is visible at the last by

a sudden catastrophe like that of the Mutiny of 1857. But the mischief which causes it is long of operation, and often of very small outward manifestation. The danger is all the greater from not being glaringly perceptible, for it may escape notice until too late. It is easy to be wise after the event. When with frontier wars on our hands, disaffection in our midst, we shall look round for the aid of a native army and for men who should play the part that the Company's officers did in the last trial, we shall find none.

And the injustice and the wrong which we have permitted since, will come back to us as curses are said to do—home to roost. Even supposing the wrong-doing of the past condoned, and the injuries to the old officers forgotten, and sterile of evil fruit, still some provision must be made for the future if we are to have a future in India. If soldiers cannot in these days be improvised, still less can their officers be so. Can we have no training, except by turning British regiments into preparatory schools for young gentlemen? Can the Imperial Government found no such college as Addiscombe in which to educate the Indian officers of the future? Will any plan give us better than those we have had, and whom we are now forcing out of employ? It will be a list of names brilliant indeed that shall eclipse the Company's muster-roll, nearly exhausted now.

But of any such list there is no vestige of promise

yet. The present state of the native army may be summarised thus: It is much too small for its purpose even in peace, and we have no troops adequate to a war. It is under-officered to a state of inefficiency. The pressure on those officers it has is far too great; and where men have more to do than they can possibly do well, they break down of necessity. This will be made manifest in the moment of any difficulty. The officers are divided into two classes—the old, who are well-nigh despairing; and the young, who are contemptuous. The reaction of these evils cannot but affect the native soldiers. They cannot but perceive the lack of interest and the loosening of the ties between themselves and their superiors. They are patient and bide their time; they draw their pay, and do their work perfunctorily. But the vital spark that should animate an army to render it a sentient as well as a corporate body, and to confer upon it the best portion of its power, is extinct.

If the native regiment under the Company was a bad school for a young officer, then some of our most distinguished soldiers contended against a singular disadvantage. They served with their native regiments from boyhood; to each belonged an intense *esprit de corps*, a pride in its renown, a strong attachment to, and a lively interest in, their men; their comrades and their leaders were veterans grown grey in war, and in

experience of the sepoys. With what kind of system have we replaced the old one? The native regiments of the present day have their officers drawn at haphazard from the long list of the Staff Corps. We quote statistics from an article which has recently appeared in the Calcutta 'Englishman':—

'In the 19 regiments of Bengal Cavalry, there are 46 field officers and 32 subalterns. In the 45 regiments of Bengal Infantry, there are 112 field officers and 110 subalterns. In the 4 Goorkha regiments, there are 12 field officers and 4 subalterns. In the 30 regiments of Bombay Infantry, there were in April last 104 field officers and 58 subalterns. In 6 regiments of Bombay Cavalry, there are 14 field officers and 16 subalterns. In the 40 regiments of Madras Native Infantry, there are 160 field officers and 21 subalterns! Anything more discreditable, or more opposed to the well-being of an army, could hardly be conceived. There are 25 regiments without a single subaltern officer.'

All these officers may be transferred from one regiment to the other at the will of the Commander-in-Chief. Their promotion does not depend in any way on their qualifications nor on their regimental standing. It is entirely dependent on the number of years of their service. As a body they have no reciprocal interest in one another; probably they have never met until accident has brought them together for a time,

the duration of which is uncertain. Rank and regimental position are often not only utterly incongruous, but the junior in rank is found in the superior position. One regiment is commanded by a captain, another has field officers as subalterns. The whole complement of the combatant officers in each regiment is but seven in number, including the staff. In most instances these are reduced by absence to four or five. It not uncommonly happens that these are all field officers, and each has to perform subaltern duties. During the musketry instruction of a native infantry regiment it not unseldom happens that, all the officers being engaged on that duty, the commandant is alone on parade with the portion of the regiment not at target practice. The details of interior economy, duties, and drills—being founded on the practice in British regiments having thirty officers—all these are thrust upon the three or four with the native regiment. The energies of all the staff, from that of head-quarters to the brigade office, are employed in requiring all the minutiæ to be as thoroughly observed as in the example, and the result of course is that the occupation of the old lieutenant-colonel in the native regiment, who is the only representative of the subaltern in the British, is one unceasing effort to combine in his own person all the manifold duties of a regimental officer from the grade of lieutenant to his own. The system is thoroughly

faulty, and is breaking down in spite of the strenuous efforts of those to whom is given the thankless and profitless task of upholding it.

It must be quite clear to the most inexperienced civilian, as well as to every military man, that the proportion of 160 field officers to twenty-one subalterns is not a proper proportion in any army; yet the system which produced this disparity is still actively at work, and each year it increases this preposterous state of things. The question naturally arises—Is nothing to be done to prevent the continued growth of the evil? Can no outlet be found to draw off this superfluity of old officers; no source be discovered for the supply of younger men? All that is really needed to fulfil both requirements is recourse to the old methods. Let the old doors for retirement be opened, the old school for cadets be refounded.

We have seen that the lagging of 'superfluous veterans on the stage' in the Company's army was prevented in great measure by the practice of buying them out, the junior officers subscribing for that purpose. The objection to this practice is clearly shown by Mr. Clode: 'No doubt when, as in the army of the late East India Company, a purchase bonus was not, but a pension on retirement was allowed, a double fraud might be committed by paying an officer for premature retirement, so as to gain his rank in succes-

sion. "If," said Chief Baron Pollock, "a person is remunerated for an office so that he can afford to buy out the holder and create a vacancy (which possibly even by merit he may be entitled to fill), he is paid more than is necessary for the public service, and all that he takes beyond that is really taken from the public without adequate consideration. So also with regard to the person retiring, the Government pays to this person when he retires a certain pension or allowance in proportion to his pay. If he would not receive it, except for the premium offered to him to induce him to resign, the consequence would be that he would remain in the service of the Government; but if some one gives him a sum of money to retire, then he resigns not because there is a proper reason for his retirement, but for the pecuniary consideration."'

Now here we have a glaring example of reasoning which is perfectly correct under one set of circumstances being totally inapplicable in another. Here in English official life, Chief Baron Pollock had in his mind the case of a person perfectly competent to fulfil the duties of an office which he might be induced to resign 'prematurely' for the sake of a sum of money. But in the Indian service the old officer's retirement was in itself 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.' He was in nearly all cases a man of more than thirty years' service in a tropical climate; his resignation, so far

from being premature, was generally deferred until long after the prime of life and power had been passed; and when it was at length brought about mainly by the combination of the junior officers in a regiment to give him the means, which his pension alone failed to do, it was a boon, not an injury, to the State. There was every proper reason for his retirement except the means of subsistence, and when this was afforded everyone gained.

The Court of Directors saw the advantage of the system, and encouraged it. When it was summarily terminated at the 'amalgamation,' it produced the unfortunate block in the way of retirements which has continued ever since. This has been very partially removed by the recent efforts of Government to compensate retiring officers by a commutation of allowances they would ultimately receive for a present bonus or an increase of pension; but to effect any real good it should not be limited to a small number of officers yearly, but offered to all those for whom no fitting employment can be found—all, in short, whose retirement would be a public gain. It may be perhaps supposed that expense would stand in the way of any sweeping measure of this kind; but, though a present outlay might be incurred, the effect of the whole would be a retrenchment of expenditure: for, in the first place, no retiring officer would receive more than an actuary's valuation

of his prospects; and, in the next, the lieutenant-colonel who had been receiving from 1,000*l.* to 1,200*l.* a year for doing subaltern's work (which could be done for less than half the money), would often gladly take a pension only half the amount of his present pay.

Justice to the officers themselves is here hand-in-hand with policy. Nothing can well be worse than the present condition of the native army, except that which is to come unless speedy reform intervene.

If we would maintain our influence, our prestige, or even our possessions in Asia, we must have armies, British and native. It is not permitted to us, nor to any nation embarked in an enterprise such as ours, to look back from our work and to withhold our hand from it. If we sit supine and content only with the contemplation of past glories, other Powers will assuredly interfere with that placid contentment. Bolder spirits than ourselves will not be wanting to attempt the seizure of booty for themselves, or to suggest reprisals to those who lost by us. A true defence is always aggressive. To await attack is to invite defeat. Unless we would emulate the blunder and share the fate of Bazaine, our part lies outside the walls of our Metz, and beyond the bastions of the Hindoo Koosh. But we can certainly make no sally now.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY BOMBAY BRANCH LIBRARY

CHAPTER IX.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

THE view which has been until very lately popular in regard to the Central Asian question has been recently put forward with the greatest show of reason it can bear by a writer in 'Fraser's Magazine' for October. The fallacies of an able advocate are often the best proof of the unsoundness of his case. '*Some remarks on our relations with Russia*' are as follows: 'If the writers of leading articles in the daily Press, who frighten us with the rapid advance of Russia towards our Indian frontier, could but form an adequate idea of the vast distance, the arid wastes, the exhausting climates, and gigantic mountain ranges which must be surmounted ere a Russian army can be marched to the banks of the Indus, it is probable that they would be more cautious in sounding the war trumpet. The fact is that there are few minds but those accustomed to military operations which are capable of comprehending the difficulty of the necessary conditions to success here involved.

Even supposing these obstacles to have been surmounted, a Russian invading force, after having traversed the torrid wastes of Central Asia and struggled heavily through the perilous passes of Afghanistan, would, when separated by 2,000 miles from its practical base of operations at Orenburgh, find itself confronted on the Indus by the British forces in one of the strongest defensive positions in existence.'

This writer appears to forget altogether that a very great proportion of the physical difficulties he displays—the vast distances, the torrid wastes, &c.—have been surmounted and passed by the Russians; that the countries now in process of absorption into their empire are some of the finest in climate and most fertile in the world; that when their forces march to the banks of the Indus their base of operations will not be Orenburgh, which is now in the heart of Russia, but at Tashkend, Bokhara, and Merv; and that the perilous passes of Afghanistan will be in the hands of allies only too ready to join them in the swoop on the promised land of all the marauders in Asia.

And yet, with strange inconsistency, the writer in 'Fraser' goes on to say: 'The truth is that causes similar to those which drew us onward in spite of ourselves till we reached the southern slopes of the Hindoo Koosh will as surely conduct Russia to the northern base.' And again: 'At no very distant period the summit of the

Hindoo Koosh will in reality divide the two great Asiatic Powers.'

Holding this opinion is it possible that the writer fails to see the prodigious advantage which Russia must then possess in her position as contrasted with ours? With one uninterrupted expanse of territory from her capital to the base of the Hindoo Koosh, embracing all the fertile and wealthy provinces of the Khanates, the great towns and marts of Central Asia, all the lines of communication with China, Persia, and India except seawards in her hands, will Russia be in no better circumstances than we, with a long and devious line of communication through countries other than our own and flanked by our great rival throughout? Any mind, military or otherwise, is capable of comprehending the essential difference of the two situations—the peril to us, the power to her.

What do our military writers tell us? General Sir Frederick Goldsmid, in a lecture at the United Service Institution in January last, said:—

'If we take routes actually traversed, with deviations and detours, the distance from Herat to Khiva by the Oxus may be reckoned roughly at a maximum of 700 miles. Of this route the two termini and the intervening station of Merv, about 430 miles from Khiva, are really the only places which demand especial notice among *centres of population*. As the crow flies, the

whole distance is less than 600, or, according to one estimate, little more than 500 miles, and Merv is barely half-way. Indeed modern geographers attribute the *commercial importance of Merv* to the circumstance that it lies almost in the centre of a region bounded by *five large markets*, Khiva, Urgunj, Bokhara, Balkh, and Herat, being 180 to 280 miles distant from each. *Mushhad, the capital of Russian Khurassan*, might have been added on the south-west as an important city within the specified limits.' (The italics are ours.) Again: 'Now the valley in which Herat is situated, inclusive of the surrounding plain, is of the most fertile class, and is rich in possession of a river.'

This is the testimony of a soldier and a traveller. Sir F. Goldsmid, though he avoids as far as possible the expression of an opinion on the political aspect, went on to say: 'Any attempt to annex Merv from the Caspian, Aral, or Oxus, could only be instigated by the ambition of barbarism or the recklessness of a wholly selfish policy. Merv, if not independent or too far from the sources and intermontane career of the Murghab to connect it with Afghanistan, is clearly Persian and a part of Khurassan.' We have already drawn attention to the pressure exercised on Persia generally by Russia. The province of Khurassan especially is, as Sir F. Goldsmid styles it, Russian in all but name. Again: 'As Herat is the supposed key to

India, so Merv is the key to Herat. In considering the approach to this quarter from the north we must not forget the present political as well as the permanent geographical situation of Bokhara, a place from which there is also a road to Herat of less than 600 miles.' Charjui or Chihardjui on the Oxus is little over 200 miles from Merv on the direct route from Bokhara to the latter place. Sir F. Goldsmid winds up his lecture with the remark: 'If I have avoided expressing any more decided political opinions on what may not be inaptly termed the question of the day, it is because such expression might here be considered irrelevant or out of place. At the same time I would take the opportunity of recording, as a result of personal experience in many countries of the East, an earnest hope that the attention of our rulers and politicians may not be drawn off from a subject, the thorough comprehension of which is so manifestly important as *scarcely to brook an hour's delay.*'

If we take the testimony of the Russians themselves, we find no such difficulties en route as the writer in 'Fraser' imagines. General Bernassckoff writes: 'A railway from East Russia to Tashkend would not only be practicable but profitable. People fancy the intervening countries uninhabited. *I have surveyed them all,* and I have found evidence of active traffic, of a numerous population, both in summer and winter. I

everywhere found water at my resting-places. There is nothing to prevent the construction of a railway all the way to Tashkend.'

If more testimony be wanted on this head we can turn to that of another military man and traveller. Colonel Baker, in a lecture given last year at the United Service Institution, speaking almost as an apologist for Russia, said: 'It is true Russia has not retired from Khiva as was originally expected; she has occupied a post upon the Amoo Duria (Oxus), and has recently concluded a treaty with Bokhara, which to all intents and purposes places the Oxus in her power, and we may for all practical purposes in the future look upon that river as her present southern boundary.' Colonel Baker next proceeded to show that the occupation of Khiva would lead to political difficulties with the Turcomans, and especially with the Tekke tribe near Merv. We know that even at this hour the Russians are pushing an expedition through the Tekke country; and that they must reach and occupy Merv, is simply a question of time—a very short time. Since Colonel Baker spoke we have seen the result of an expedition into Khokand, another up the Attrek, and a third threatened into Kashgar.

Again, he said: 'Herat has often and justly been characterised as the key to India. Its importance is thoroughly known and appreciated throughout the East,

and there are very few Asiatics who are not well aware that England could never permit Herat to be held by any Power that could ever actively menace our Indian interests.' After pointing out that the Caucasus has been so completely subjugated and incorporated in the Russian empire that it is now in a thoroughly settled state, and that even in the case of a war between Russia and any other Power there would be no probability of the Circassians on Lesghians rising against her, Colonel Baker goes on to say:—

'Turning to the north-east, we must come to the Kirghiz tribes. These tribes were gradually subdued by Russia, but the three important Powers that were virtually separating her from Persia and Afghanistan were Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand. Of these the most formidable was Khiva. Russia therefore turned Khiva, she advanced against Bokhara and Khokand, and in the course of a few years she pushed her territory far to the south and occupied Samarcand. You are all conversant with what has recently taken place relative to Khiva. Notwithstanding the numerous natural difficulties which existed and the great want of water, Russia by well organised columns acting upon different lines thoroughly succeeded in her object.'[1]

A recent writer in one of the Indian newspapers

[1] *See* lecture by Captain Trench, 20th Hussars, 'Journal of Royal United Service Institution,' vol. xviii. p. 212 *et seq.*

informed us that a road was now in course of construction from Chihardjui towards Herat on which 2,000 labourers were daily employed. This statement may or may not be true, but it is certainly probable. In any case the weight of concurrent testimony from all quarters is overwhelming that the progress of Russia throughout Turkestan is both sure and rapid. And, as in the instance of the writer in 'Fraser,' the opinions even of those who see no danger to ourselves in that progress are clear that it will not be checked short of the Hindoo Koosh.

Yet, with the same inconsistency which is always displayed when the logical consequences of their own admissions are pointed out, the people who uphold the policy of 'masterly inactivity' shift their ground, and when they can no longer contest 'the inexorable logic of facts' they deny the value of the points gained one after another by our rival. Now that Russian progress is seen to place Herat in jeopardy it has become the fashion to speak of it as a place of no importance, and of its being the 'key to India' as of an antiquated and exploded idea.

Yet Herat is certainly the point of junction of all the great roads running from east to west or from north to south in that part of Central Asia. There is one from Mushhad, another from Merv, another from Chihardjui, another from Balkh. It commands the easiest roads to Candahar and to Cabul.

Khanikoff, in his work published in 1862, represents it as a centre for all the main routes of Central Asia in an easterly and westerly direction; and says that even Bokhara goods must pass through Herat to Mushhad. Sir Frederick Goldsmid says: 'Whatever objections on the score of outward appearance may arise in contemplation of the town, all travellers agree in commending the beauty and fertility of the Herat valley, said to be capable of affording supplies to 150,000 men. Independently of the immense natural advantage of a river, man has not been idle in the improvements and extension of cultivation by artificial means. Irrigation has been carried on to a considerable extent. . . . The grain produced is abundant, beyond the requirements of town and suburbs together. The bread, the water, the vines have the credit of special excellence.' Herat, therefore, would afford to Russia, were it in her occupation, precisely the advantages necessary for the invasion of India. It would be a place where a large army might be concentrated and supplied, and commanding all the principal lines of communication between the base of operations and the point of attack. Therefore, in the sense of a means of entry into India, Herat is the 'key' to that country.

With each fresh step that Russia takes in advance her facilities of further progress increase, and her difficulties diminish. From Herat to Candahar the country

presents no physical difficulties to the march of an army. It is constantly traversed by Afghan troops in the present day. The invasion of India from Cabul and Candahar would present, not greater, but less physical obstacles to a Russian army than those surmounted in the advance on Khiva from Krasnovodsk; the arid wastes, the exhausting climates, will all have been passed when Russia gives the signal for the march to the Indus. For defence we certainly cannot look to these physical difficulties, which seem so formidable to the writer in 'Fraser.' Worse than these have been already conquered in view but to a fractional part of the reward which would await a successful inroad upon our wealthy provinces.

Colonel Baker's opinion on the possibility of the march of an army from the Caspian upon Herat is the more valuable because he is himself by no means a 'Russo-phobist,' and because, as he said, he made it his special business when in Central Asia to investigate that question. 'The main road from Teheran to Herat runs by Mushhad. That this road is possible for troops is proved by the fact that at different times the Persian armies have marched by that route. But I found there were two very much easier routes. That road is very badly watered; in fact, the march of a large body of troops would be impossible along the whole route; only battalions at a time could be pushed forward, in some

places, unless water were carried. But if you follow the left bank of the Attrek, you march up it by a good road till you come into a most fertile valley near Boojnoord; you have the water of the Attrek the whole way to Shirvan, you have a thorough water supply all down the valley to Mushhad, and the march from *Mushhad to Herat* we know *has often been accomplished by large armies.* But that is not the only line. If you take the other bank of the Attrek and march up by the Simbur river, and follow at the foot of the great mountain range, there is also an ample water supply existing the whole way, and there is no military difficulty of any sort in the march of an army of very considerable strength. . . . The consequence is that one army might march by the north, and, getting on to the Heri-rood river, march to Herat. Another army might march on the other bank, taking the valley by Shirvan and Koochan, and so reach Mushhad and Herat; whilst a third army might follow the old road from Asterabad to Mushhad, and so to Herat. Therefore you will see there are three distinct lines of march, and on the two least known lines very large armies might be marched with very little difficulty.'

If this be true—and it is the account of a traveller, an eye-witness, and a very intelligent soldier—the physical obstacles to an invasion of India do not appear insurmountable from the Caspian. That sea is to all

intents and purposes a Russian lake. The completion of the projected line of railway from Tiflis to Baku on its western shore will render the line of communication the most direct possible—straight from Poti on the Black Sea through Tiflis, to which point the railway is open, Baku, Asharada (a Russian cantonment), Mushhad, Herat, to Candahar. If we compare this line with our own communication viâ the Red Sea, we shall see at a glance the vast superiority of our rival's position, and we shall not fail to perceive the full significance of the violation of the treaty of 1856, which conferred the possession of this line on Russia. The sovereign importance of the Black Sea to that Power is clearly distinguishable from this point of view.

If there be anything wanting to invest this line with the most absolute security, it will be found in the projected railways from Tiflis to Erivan, thence to Tabreez and Teheran, with an ultimate prospect of connection, viâ Ispahan and Shiraz, with the Persian Gulf. It may be said that this scheme is in the far distant future; and doubtless its completion is so. But our argument is against the persistent inactivity which heeds neither the lapse of time nor the gradual but certain development of a position we cede to Russia in fragments, and which when united will be incapable of rectification.

According to the optimists our position on the Indus is one of the 'strongest in existence.' As regards

its strategical value the disadvantages have been already explained. When Russia has accomplished that design of pushing her frontier to the Hindoo Koosh, which even the most sanguine acknowledge that she will certainly do, our present position will be untenable, and retirement from it will be equivalent to abdication.

Then the 'passes of Afghanistan' will be 'perilous' enough to us. All the difficulties alleged against the Russian advance now would then be ours. Quoting one of the most lucid treatises on the operations of war ever written [1]—'Although the supply of a large army operating beyond a mountain range can only be maintained by the high roads that cross the range, yet in all mountain districts there are numerous paths by which troops, unattended by cumbrous trains and carrying supplies for a few days on the men's persons and on pack animals, can pass over the crests. But if the defensive army should spread and occupy all of these the communications between the parts of its front must be broken and circuitous. An assailant mastering any of the passes would descend in the rear of the defenders of other points, who, necessarily very sensitive about their communications, could never hold their ground with confidence. Moreover, an army spread in this way, in barren roadless districts on inhospitable summits, must suffer unusual privations. Evidently a prolonged de-

[1] Colonel Hamley's 'Operations of War,' Third Edition, chap. iii.

fence conducted on such a system would be very costly in men and material, and of very uncertain advantage.'

If this description of the position (which will be ours) be sufficiently gloomy applying it in the case of an army on its own soil, we can imagine it would not be improved in the case of an army distant from its base, the sea, many hundreds of miles, and from its reserves in Great Britain many thousands of miles. If we take the present state of either British or native army as described in the foregoing chapters into consideration when contemplating that position, we shall be something more than sanguine if we can discern no danger. Yet it is always assumed by the party of inactivity that we must stand upon the defensive in the attitude described above. If we advance of course the policy of inactivity ceases and our conclusions are accepted, but until we do so this manifest peril attendant upon the defence of a long line of mountains always menaces us.

All that can possibly be advanced against this view is that the peril is not immediate. But looking at the progress it makes from year to year, and remembering the truth from which our argument took its rise—the rapidity with which the events of all modern progress succeed one another—we cannot avoid the conviction that we have no time to lose if we would main-

tain our empire intact. The need to do this should require little urging upon any nation. To Great Britain more than to any nation the need is vital. With a debt such as ours, a population such as ours, and a food supply such as ours, the loss of money, men, and trade, such as would be involved by any severe blow at India, would be a *mortal* wound.

The train of reflections we have pursued leads us to conclusions which we may summarise as follows:—

War is the inevitable result and culmination of a natural process. The dissolution of a State, one of a group of nations wherein a certain equilibrium of power has been ostensibly maintained for a considerable period, is an event which will of necessity precipitate war. That event is now imminent. On the nation least prepared for war the greatest loss and suffering will certainly be inflicted by it. The empire now perishing, by the decay of the influences which bind human communities together to form a State, is Turkey. The European Power least prepared for war among those most interested in the coming change is Great Britain. Our vulnerable points are more numerous than those of any of the great empires arrayed one against another. Our armies least in size and least capable of enlargement. Our most vulnerable point is our Indian empire; it is that which is the most immediately threatened by the raising of the Eastern Question; which

question cannot now be postponed. Diplomacy is merely the paper currency, valuable only as representing the capital of force. When armies are wanting to back it, diplomacy is worthless. The first essential to the safety of a State is the power of waging successful war. The effect of material progress has been to render war so rapid in its course as to allow of little time to provide for its contingencies after it has commenced. The necessity for its preparation is greater now than ever. The improvement in the machinery and appliances for war, renders numerical strength, size, and equipment, of more proportional importance than formerly, when courage and skill could more easily supply material deficiencies. Great Britain has always relied more on the moral qualities than on the numbers of her troops.

With dominions of the greatest area and outspread over the widest portion of the globe, she maintains them with a force which has become inadequate to the task imposed upon it. The truth of this will assuredly be made manifest under the strain of war.

Our interests have become so completely and inextricably bound up with the integrity of our empire and the security of our hold of India, that our loss of it now would involve our national ruin.

The farther the outside limits of an empire extend from its centre, the more difficult it becomes to defend

them. Our farthest boundaries are at the Antipodes. The longer the line of communication from the main body of an army to its outposts, the more difficult to supply them from the reserves. Our line of communication with India is long and weak. When such a line is threatened from a flank its position is full of peril. Our line is threatened from the flank by a great and powerful rival. The vast empire which we hold at the immense distance of India from England is held by force of arms alone. The armies which hold it are of two descriptions; the one, an English army, is in point of size at an almost incredible disproportion to the wide territory it is required to hold; never in the history of the world—never in the history of war—was such a task as the defence of a million of square miles of country assigned to a force which does not (including officers) amount to 70,000 men; and even this number we have no present means of maintaining in face of the contingencies of war. The other, the native army, raised from the conquered population, alien in heart, mind, and soul, is numerically small to insignificance, is weak where it should be strongest, in the proportion of European officers to Asiatic soldiers, and is the object of a distrust born of the greatest military revolt in history.

To these two armies is entrusted the preservation of India as an integral portion of our empire. That

dominion is exposed to assault from without, and to insurrection from within. The last resource which England, in common with every valiant nation, possesses for self-defence is Universal Conscription. To repel an invasion all the manhood of our island could and would be arrayed against the foe. That resource is not available for the maintenance of a foreign possession. We could not recruit the army of India by Universal Conscription even if we could defend our hearths by it.

Yet the loss of India would be an injury scarcely less vital to our national existence than the invasion of England herself; for upon our wealth and prestige involved in that possession we are dependent not only for the respect of other nations, but finally—for food. The great catastrophe to Great Britain would not be such as befel France when conquered—its temporary occupation by a foreign army—but a paralysis of trade which would destroy all government and which would give up our island to the wild influence of Revolution aided by—famine. That would be the result of a European combination against the wealthiest of kingdoms.

The temptation to such combination would be irresistible under circumstances in no way improbable.

Severe reverses to our arms abroad would be followed by outbreaks of savage wrath at home. Seizing

the opportunity of popular ferment and shaken Government, the passions, which always animate the dangerous classes of great cities, Envy and jealous Hatred, would inspire the Misery which now crouches at the feet of Splendour to rise in mad desire for destruction, in crave for utter havoc. It is thus that long-repressed suffering avenges itself on the full-lipped content by its side; thus that the enduring inequality among the conditions of men restores the balance by violence. So divided, England would invite invasion.

Revolting and startling as this conclusion may seem, incredible as it will appear to most minds, it is nevertheless the logical issue of facts quite incontestable. We have the wide empire, open to certain dangers, defended by means which must be pronounced inadequate, if measured by the precautions taken by all other nations in the world. The great distance at which it lies from us is not better ascertained than the nature of our tenure of it. We cannot withdraw from the position; that is now universally allowed. We may quote the testimony of Mr. Grant Duff as conclusive on this point; for he styles himself the 'mouth-piece of the Secretary of State for India in Council' of the Government whose Indian policy we have reviewed and which has led us into the present position. In the pages of the 'Contemporary Review' for November 1875, Mr. Grant Duff admits that on 'the question of the

economical advantages of dropping India now,' 'the thing is absolutely impossible.' 'We are in for it and must stick to it,' for 'if we dropped India now' we could not 'arrange about the Indian debt,' or the railways, or the numerous 'creations of English capital;' we could not compensate our 'servants whose careers would be destroyed by the abandonment of India;' we could not pay the pensions of all those who have served that country,' under our régime, and 'whose means of livelihood is largely derived from her resources;' we could not 'compensate the innumerable traders who would be so grievously prejudiced by' a 'change in policy,' as to have a good right to ask for compensation. As Mr. Grant Duff says, we are in for it and must stick to it, and we cannot 'conceive any one coming to an opposite conclusion even if he took the gloomiest view possible.'

To maintain the empire Mr. Grant Duff looks to 'diplomacy.' 'As at present advised, I should imagine that there would be some difficulty in making any decided diplomatic stand about Merv.' Without an army in the background we should certainly agree with Mr. Grant Duff; 'but Merv is uncomfortably near Herat;' so he would make a 'representation' to Russia: 'Do you not think that the object which both nations have in view will be best attained by your making no permanent settlement there?' Mr. Grant Duff thinks

'such a representation would very likely have been successful because any interest which Russia may have in going to Merv is far less urgent than the interest which she has in keeping on cordial terms with this country alike in Asia and in Europe.' We would ask Mr. Grant Duff, as a member of the British Government which permitted the violation by Russia of the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1856, whether he considers that in that violation Russia displayed the interest she has in keeping on cordial terms with us?

We repeat, Diplomacy is worthless when unsupported by Force.

Important as the last step taken by the present British Government is, viz. the acquisition of the right of way through Egypt by purchase, a step which in its consequences seems to declare the adoption of a policy the reverse of that 'masterly inactivity' which we have denounced, it must be remembered that the route we have so acquired will not long be the shortest or easiest road from Europe to India—that our rival is advancing by a nearer path; secondly, we shall be called upon to make good our right to our new possession by means beyond diplomacy. We can hardly suppose the present Government would have thus blown the horn unless they had been prepared to draw the sword. But we have assuredly no time to lose. This act of happy promise must be followed at once by an organisation

of our means of defence on a scale adequate to our reassumption of legitimate position in Europe and Asia.

The traveller leaving the broad frozen deserts of Thibet to sterility and silence, on his road southward for this glowing, teeming peninsula of India, from whose 'storehouses of the world' we English have for the past century drawn forth the streams of wealth whose price—the lives that have been paid for our enriching—we seem to have forgotten now, surmounts in his course range after range of mountains of which the height even of the easiest passes so far exceeds the limits at which any form of life can be permanently sustained, that his own footstep is the only source of sound not born of the wind or the frost, the avalanche as it falls, or the rending of the glacier. No bird flies in that wintry air, no lichen stains the barren rock.

Lifted in body above the habitable world, his thought too regards as from afar the mundane things that seem so small, dwarfed in the depths below him. The keen crags which pierce the spotless sheet wherewith their frowns and furrows are partly veiled, bear memories of an inscrutable past graven on their granite facets, and, as he tries to read them, something of the truths they

half reveal cannot but awake his imagination and touch his heart.

All that philosophy can learn or religion teach, bereft of their frippery the dogmas of the school and the pulpit, the brevity and peril of life, the utter insignificance of the creature in the scheme of the Creation, the vanity of ambition and the mirage of hope, are plain to him as he stands facing them alone. But even while his step lingers, the quick grip of the frozen wind seems to seize and bind the struggling pulses in his veins, and the colossal grandeur of these monuments to the ages to overawe and still the efforts of the brain. He turns away that he may not perish, and his sight, wandering down an avenue of snowy peaks, is caught, ere it can leap, as it were, over the edge of the world, by the glint like that of a shattered diamond that marks the last glacier in the view.

As he passes downward through the cobalt vaults of the air the scene slowly changes, until at length from the vast portals of desolation he issues to the fragrance of the garden, the melody of loosened streams, the murmur of life, and the beauty of the earth. His foot is trammelled with flowers and his eyes entranced by colour. The rifts in the mountains on either hand are shaded by cedars, and dark olive-hued forests cover the countless slopes from the edge of the steep scarped cliffs to the emerald border of the terraced meadows,

down so deep and distant that the châlets perched beside them are but as grey specks on the ribbon that enfolds itself green and winding up to yonder bend in the valley, and the purple of the hill that closes the vista.

Filled with admiration that is kin to worship, and exulting in his life that may discern and own the delight, his unsated eyes rest on the blended tints till the picture can never be forgotten. It is then, as he prepares to resume his way, that he notes from one of the most distant and bluest glens in the landscape the swift uprising of great folded curves of sombre vapour, wreathed and swayed by the eddies of the wind. As from the burning of some great forest tract, the dense spirals hurry forth, wave over wave, growing lighter as they untwist their coils in the upper air, to the fancy of the observer the fair scene seems blurred by the grey hues that spread so fast, and the fading of the brilliance of the woods and the fields mars the glory of the prospect, but now so perfect in loveliness. A little while, and a wisp of the seeming smoke is wafted across the valley towards him. Now, as born of the instant, the whole atmosphere is filled with filmy wings, and myriads upon myriads of locusts, thick as snow-flakes in a storm, sweep past below and above him with a glitter like the spray of a torrent, and with a rustle as of falling leaves.

Is it possible that those thick dark volutes of smoke he watched issuing from the gorge an hour ago were composed of these swarming sentient insects? They have power of volition, have eyes to see and muscles and wings to bear them from danger. Resting on the traveller's path so thickly that it seems as though he can take no step without crushing many, they rise as he nears them, and wing their way whither they will.

Yet they obeyed but now the laws that sway the lifeless, the inorganic, atoms of vapour. Precisely as would move the inanimate particles of carbon in the current of air, so moved these living creatures. Yet each locust of those many millions, as it rose on the wing, conscious of life, of its power of flight, and delighting in its strength, knew no law, save that of its own will to rejoice in the sunbeam, and to seek the food special for it.

Even it, with the innumerable hosts of its fellows, seemed but as smoke, which is the sport of every lightest breeze that plays beneath the heavens. And it is thus that the courses of Empires are guided by as sure an influence as that which twines the curl of the vapour's wreath.

Forth from the fertile places of the earth issue the armies and hordes of men, with the glitter of steel like the torrent's spray, and the rustle heard from afar as of forest leaves. They stream like the snow-flakes

of the storm, and are guided by the breath of a power they do not know. They exult like the locusts in their strength and their will, and fly to seek their food where it is spread, and their prey in its haunts. And each wind from Heaven drives them whither it will.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018